

VISIONS AND NARRATIVES
OF THE OLD TESTAMENT

GEORGE EMLÉN HARE, D.D.

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the Old Testament

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OF THE

OLD TESTAMENT

BY

GEORGE EMLEN HARE, D.D., LL.D.



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TO THE READER.

*Much of the substance of this little work has
appeared in articles contributed to
periodicals at various times by*

THE AUTHOR.

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CHAPTER I.

THE ORIGIN OF THE SABBATH.

GENESIS I. 1-II. 3.

TEN parts of the Book of Genesis begin with such words as these: "These are the generations of the Heaven and the Earth," "This is the book of the generations of Adam."* An eleventh part, the first in order of place, commences with the words, "In the beginning;" and this part is distinguishable from the parts which follow, not only by its commencement, but by a difference of style. The name of the Deity throughout the portion ending with II. 3, is simply "God." Throughout the portion beginning with II. 4 the predominating name is either "the LORD" or "the LORD God." It seems to be admitted that such facts make the record beginning with Gen. I. 1, and ending with Gen. II. 3, a whole within itself.

* Gen. ii. 4, v. 1, vi. 9, x. 1, xi. 10, xi. 27, xxv. 12, xxv. 19, xxxvi. 1, xxxvii. 2.

Several of the phenomena of this record invite investigation, especially when they are compared with other parts of Scripture. The passage seems to represent the stars as brought into existence on the fourth day, whereas, according to the book of Job,* the stars "sang" at the founding of the earth. The days mentioned in the record are alternations of light and darkness. If the earth rotated in the first week of its existence with the same velocity that it now rotates, they must have been days of twenty-four hours,—and between the *third* day, until which the earth was covered by the ocean, and the *sixth* day, on which man was created, only seventy-two hours would intervene, an interval too short to make rain necessary or propitious to vegetation. But the statement of the second chapter seems to be,† that during the interval before the creation of man, every herb grew not, because the LORD God had not caused it to rain upon the earth, and there was not a man to till the ground. The whole account supposes the presence of a by-stander. The language is, "God said, Let there be light," "God said, Let there be a firmament," "God said, Let the waters under the Heaven be gathered unto one place." Except for the sake of a person or persons present, why

* Job xxxviii. 7.

† Gen. ii. 4.

address things non-existent or inanimate? And the by-stander has an idea of man, an idea of dry land, so that the Divine utterance can run without explanation—"Let us make man in our image," "Let the dry land appear," whereas a by-stander, possessed or not possessed of such ideas, a by-stander belonging to the race to be instructed, neither was nor, according to the record, could be present. A human by-stander was not yet created. Much is made of alternations of light and darkness six times occurring; and the significance of the six-fold mention of these alternations does not appear if the first chapter is read (as it formerly was in church worship) by itself. Remarkable is the iteration of the mention of the Deity: "God created," "God said," "God saw," "God made," "God divided," "God set," "God blessed."

The curious record with which we have to do,—the first record in the book of Genesis—may have originated in an inspired vision, and like the revelations of Micaiah, the son of Imlah, and St. John the Divine, may be symbolic, of the nature of a parable. The seer may have had a scope the same as that of other visions of which we hear in Scripture, a scope not touching the scientific domain,—not taking within its range any points of chronology, except such as were essential to the purpose

of the Spirit,—a scope purely theological or religious. On the supposition that this was the case, the remarkable phenomena, mentioned above are capable of a satisfactory explanation. With relation to the fact that between the third and the sixth days—within an interval of seventy-two hours—the earth previously covered by the great deep had begun to want rain for vegetation, the remark is obvious that alternations of light and darkness, seen in vision, do not need to be understood of periods of twenty-four hours.

If the Mosaic record is an account of a vision vouchsafed to a prophet, the fact explains the utterances, “Let us make man,” “Let the dry land appear,” although these utterances assume the presence of a by-stander, and that to this by-stander, “man” and “dry land” were familiar terms. At the time of the vision, though not at the time represented by the vision, there was a by-stander, viz., the spirit of the prophet, and to this by-stander man and dry land were things well known.

A vision which exhibits the sun, moon and stars as beginning to be within the expanse or reach of open space, in the course of the vision’s fourth alternation of light and darkness, hardly needs to be reconciled with the probability that these heavenly

bodies existed previously, or with the fact that in the Book of Job the stars appear as celebrating the foundation of the earth. The fiat heard by the inner ear of the seer, "Let there be lights in the firmament of the Heaven to divide the day from the night,"—translate rather "Let there come * bearers of light in the expanse of the Heaven to divide the day from the night"—this fiat and that execution of this fiat, which passed before the seer's inner eyes, were compatible with the fact, if fact it was, that some or all of the heavenly luminaries had existed previously.

Some have transferred the facts which the inspired narrator has exhibited in their visional aspect into an aspect more realistic. They have said substantially as follows :

A great deep, the ocean, covering the globe everywhere, was itself everywhere covered by clouds altogether impervious to the rays of the sun. Total darkness was consequently upon all things. These clouds were subsequently rarified, became penetrable by the sunlight ; became trans-

* The verb signifies "to become" or "to come to be," and is elsewhere translated by the word "come," Gen. xv. 1. The word rendered "light" in the authorized version at Gen. i. 1-5 and 18 differs from the word so translated at Gen. i. 14. This last word is sometimes equivalent to "candlestick" or "candelabrum."

lucent ; and this translucency continued for a spot or quarter of the globe, until the globe, revolving on its axis, ceased to expose that spot or quarter to this beneficent influence. The lapse of time which witnessed the appearance of light, together with the lapse of time during which the earth was again in darkness, formed the first of the six periods which appear in the representation of the seer as days.

At the beginning of a second period, the aëriform waters, though they had become translucent, were not transparent. No object could have been discerned at the beginning of the second period except the thick clouds, which, though they had come to admit the perception of light, admitted the perception of nothing else. Before the end of the second period, a space intervened between the "deep," which continued to submerge the globe and the region of thick cloud ; an expanse, a field of sight, in which objects would have been visible if an eye had existed, divided between the aëriform water and the waters of the ocean. This was the period, long or short, to represent which the seer is made to hear the utterance and to behold the making told of in the words " Let there be an expanse in the midst of the waters, and let it divide waters from waters. And God made the expanse

. and God called the expanse Heaven. And there came to be an evening and there came to be a morning ; a second day."

In the third period, the ocean ceased to submerge the whole of the earth, land became apparent, vegetation rose upon the surface of the land, each vegetable having within itself the means of reproduction. This period is symbolically exhibited in the words of verses 9-13.

In the beginning of the fourth period the expanse which was to render objects visible reached only to a region of clouds. The expanse could not include the source of light, the sun, or the moon, or the stars. Before the fourth period ended another stage of things began. The heavens became cloudless. Though the sun, the moon and the stars had existed before, they now began to be within the expanse or field of vision. The seer, seeing or hearing nothing except in its relations to human beings—the change and its beneficent results appearing to the prophet in their religious aspects simply—this inspired writer depicts the appearance of the heavenly bodies in the words of verses 14-19.

If such a series of conjectures seems probable, it is not certain. Such conjectures are not made necessary by the representations of our passage,

however they may consist with these representations. The language of the narrative is not that of a physicist. The statement runs again and again, "God said," and "God made." The one clause refers to the origin of the thing afterwards named, the other to the causation by which the design was effected. Both clauses bring prominently into view the Divine action and leave out of view everything else. That which appears to the prophet is an ideal. It remains to discuss the responsibilities of the first section of the Book of Genesis, the responsibilities which have been falsely attributed to the passage, and the responsibilities which truly belong to it.

1. The record with which we have to do is not responsible for the notion of a metallic sky, or of an ocean above that sky. The Bible knows not of any waters above our heads, except waters in an aëriform state, *i. e.*, clouds. The firmament of which our seer speaks, was a thing which, on the second day, divided the waters which were under the firmament from the waters which were above the firmament, and a thing which, on the fourth day, included the sun, moon and stars. The firmament then—the original is better translated on the margin of our Bibles, the "expanse"—can hardly be anything but the medium through which we see,

when we look upward. It is the reach of space above our heads, the space ordinarily transparent. What else could be represented as dividing the waters from the waters. The notion of a metallic firmament, imputed to Moses, is the invention of interpreters.

2. The record is not responsible for the opinion that we ought to reckon the Lord's Day, or other of our days, from sunset to sunset. The words "the second day" follow the account of the work of that day, and imply that the evening and morning mentioned in connection with that account, were the evening which followed the noon and the dawn which ended the night belonging to the second day. It is with strict accuracy that the revisers of the current English Bible translate "And there was evening and there was morning" a second day. The like may be said of similar sentences in the first chapter, respecting the days. If these sentences bind us to any special mode of computing the time of the Lord's Day or other days, it is rather to the computation from daybreak to daybreak. But it is hardly within the scope of the vision to impose any such obligation.

3. The record is not responsible for any of the different opinions advocated by interpreters, in regard to the questions—whether the duration of

the chaotic state was long or short, for minutes or for ages, whether there was, or was not, an interval between the creation and the choas ; and if there was such an interval, whether it lasted for millions of years, or only for the twinkling of an eye. The account is reconcilable with—and does not tie us to—any of these opinions.

4. The passage is not responsible for the opinion that the periods which it denominates days were of equal length, each a period of twenty-four hours. That they were not periods of twenty-four hours has been shown from the hindrance to vegetation, arising from the want of rain, mentioned in Genesis II. In the latter passage the period named a “ day ” seems to have included not less than three of the days mentioned in the first chapter. It may be added that within the limits of the fifth verse of the first chapter “ day ” first signifies daytime as distinguished from night, and afterwards includes both daytime and night.

5. The account is not responsible for the opinion that light existed before the sun, though this opinion may be consistent with the account.

6. It appertains to the subject to say that the sacredness given to the number seven in this account belongs to this number in many other of the appointments which came through Moses. The

Passover, the great festival of the year, was to be celebrated for seven days. Seven weeks after the Passover the Feast of Pentecost was to take place ; and this was to be celebrated with the use of seven lambs. In the seventh month, and to be kept for seven days, was the Feast of Tabernacles. The seventh year was to be Sabbatical, and every seventh Sabbatical year was to introduce a jubilee.

But, not insisting on a matter comparatively insignificant, and passing from negations with regard to the responsibilities of the first portion of the Book of Genesis, to affirmations respecting this account, the account is answerable for the Sabbath. This section of the sacred book winds up with the declaration "God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it, because on it He rested from all His work which God creatively did." The catastrophe unravels the plot : the issue of the vision develops the plan of the vision.

The words are such as to imply that rest is blessedness, and sanctity a duty ; that it was proper that a day should be set apart periodically for the enjoyment of this blessedness and the cultivation of this sanctity ; and that the facts that the Divine Being wrought creatively for six periods, and discontinued this working in the seventh

period, should furnish the rule of the periodicity—should, for Israelites elevate the seventh of every seven alternations of light and darkness to the blessedness of rest and the dignity of sanctification. A large part of the Christian Church has for ages celebrated the cessation of the work of St. Stephen as the crowning act of his life. His martyrdom was that by which he finished his course. It was, as it were, the *finale* of his career. In a manner somewhat similar, Israel was to celebrate the work and character of God by setting apart the seventh day of every hebdomad in memory of the time at which in an inspired representation the Divine Being gave the complement to His creative action.

7. Another thing for which the record in Genesis I. 1-II. 3 is plainly responsible, is the doctrine with which the account commences—"In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth," the principle or doctrine which the writer shows to be a chief thing in his mind and at his heart, by his remarkable iterations: "The spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters," "God said," "God saw," "God divided," "God called," "God made,"—the principle that the earth, the daily succession of darkness to light, the expanse, the sea and the land, the vegetable and its seed or means of repro-

duction, the sun, the moon and the stars ; fish, reptiles, birds ; last, not least, human beings, and the pairs or couples in which these appear, are the workmanship of God ; created, contemplated, distributed, arranged for, approved by the Divine Being ; therefore fit themes for praise, and, not least, for Sabbatical praise.

In the books of Scripture which followed the writings of Moses, no passages are to be found which make the account with which we have to do a ground for theories touching chronology or natural science, whereas in these later books of Scripture applications of the religious teaching of our record abound. When Psalmists write—* “ The heavens declare the glory of God ; the expanse showeth the work of His hands, day unto day uttereth speech,” “ By the Word of the Lord were the heavens made and all the host of them by the breath of His mouth, He gathereth the waters of the sea together, . . . He spake and it was done, He commanded and it stood fast,” “ To Him that by wisdom made the heavens, . . . that stretched out the earth above the waters, . . . that made the great lights, . . . the sun to rule the day, . . . the moon and the stars to govern the night,” “ The day is thine, the night also is thine. *Thou* hast

* Ps. xix., xxxiii. 6, 7, cxxxvi. 5-9, lxxiv. 16, civ. 6-9.

prepared the light and the sun," "Thou coverest the earth with the deep, as with a garment. The waters stood above the mountains, at Thy rebuke they fled, . . . they go down by the valleys into the place which Thou hast founded for them, Thou hast set a bound that they may not pass over"—who can fail to find Genesis I. 1-II. 3 reproduced, and reproduced for the purpose of kindling adoration. The expanse, the day unto day, the word of the Lord making the heavens and all the host of them, the gathering together of the waters, the stretching out the earth above the waters, the making great lights to rule the day and the night, the fleeing of the waters, are simply allusions to the teaching in the first Mosaic record, and are examples of the use to which the later Scriptures apply the representations of the first Mosaic record—the use—the only use—to which those who would imitate the Psalmists should apply these symbolic representations of religious truth.

In brief, the creation, up to the time of the making of Adam, an event of the sixth day, was a thing of such nature that the knowledge of it could not be acquired as the knowledge of ordinary history is acquired—could not be learned except in a supernatural manner. Communications of a supernatural kind were, according to Scripture, often made by

means of inspired visions ; and when thus made, might be reproduced by the pen of the seer in the form—with nothing but the imagery—wherein they had been exhibited to the inspired eye or ear. The phenomena of Genesis I. 1–II. 3 are such that they can hardly be explained, except upon the supposition that the narrative is of a symbolical nature. Such a supposition being admitted, difficulties disappear.

The fact that our Lord's admonition, "Take heed, and beware of the leaven of the Pharisees," conflicted with the manner and character of the Utterer, if taken in the letter, *i. e.*, of the leaven of bread, required and warranted the taking of that utterance in a meaning deeper than that which lay on the surface. So it was with the cursing of the barren fig-tree ; and so it is with the first section of the Book of Genesis.

CHAPTER II.

SONS OF GOD AND DAUGHTERS OF MAN.

GENESIS IV. 26-VI. 1-5.

THE fifth chapter of the Book of Genesis did not appear as such—viz., as a separate chapter—for many centuries after the death of the writer of the book. The contents of the passage are in the nature of a long parenthesis, and the opening of the sixth chapter connects in meaning with the close of the fourth. The close of the fourth and the opening of the sixth may be translated as follows—in part after the manner of the revisers of the authorized version :

“ And to Seth, to him also there was born a son; and he called his name Enos : then began men to call upon the name of the LORD and it came to pass, when man began to multiply on the face of the ground and daughters were born unto them, that the sons of God saw the daughters of man that they were fair. and they took them wives

from all that they chose. And the LORD said, My spirit will never rule in man. In their going astray they are flesh. And his days shall be an hundred and twenty years. The Nephilim were on the earth in those days, and also after the sons of God came in unto the daughters of man and they bare children unto them. The same are the mighty men which from of old are the men of renown. And the LORD saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every work of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually."

The passage is accompanied by repeated statements that all flesh had corrupted its way and that the earth was filled with violence. With such accompaniments the passage ushers in the account of the deluge.

There are curious things in the passage. After mention of the birth of Enos, a grandson of Adam, the statement is, "Then began men to call upon the name of the LORD." It seems difficult to reconcile this statement with the fact that earlier parts of the Book of Genesis clearly imply that the acknowledgment of the Being named the LORD obtained much earlier. This acknowledgment appears in the exclamation of Eve when she had become the mother of Cain,—“I have gotten a

man from the LORD,"—and in the declaration that Cain went out "from the presence of the LORD." The exclamation and the declaration each implied an invocation of the name of the LORD. The beginning mentioned as having occurred in the times of Enos may have been a *new* beginning. The times of Enos lasted for more than eleven centuries. Before the twelve hundredth year of the Christian era, men had, to a large extent, substituted the worship of the Virgin and other departed saints for the worship of the one true God; and the men called Waldenses may be said to have begun to call upon the One Sacred Name at the time when they departed from the corruption to which they had conformed. Within the first twelve hundred years from the creation there may have been a widespread apostasy. Polytheism or atheism may have taken the place of a pure theism; and there may thus have been room for beginning anew to call upon the name of the LORD. Before the times of Enos ended, Enoch, the seventh from Adam, lived. Enoch walked with God. God took him: he was translated that he should not see death. According to St. Jude, this patriarch, the seventh from Adam, prophesied of a judgment to come. His ministrations may have been the means of

bringing about among men the resumption of the worship of Jehovah.

After the genealogy in the parenthetical chapter, the narrative proceeds with the statement that it came to pass "when man began to multiply on the earth and daughters were born to them, that the sons of God saw the daughters of man that they were fair, and they took them wives from all that they chose." Who were these sons of God? They may be the same as had anew begun to call upon the name of the LORD. The same persons as had been previously described by their reformed practice—their return to the worship of the one proper object of adoration—may be designated in this place by a phrase importing a second birth. Throughout the Scriptures, men to whom the Divine influence has given a new quality are spoken of as sons of God. When persons wondered that Saul the son of Kish, a man not previously known as a "man of God," appeared as a prophet, they exclaimed, with reference to acknowledged prophets, "And who is *their* Father?" meaning that He who had inspired prophets previously acknowledged, could bestow a like inspiration on persons who before had not been of the inspired class. In the Proverbs* "the children of the LORD" is a

* Prov. xiv. 26.

name given to such as entertain the fear of God. In an utterance addressed to the Divine Being by a Psalmist,* the "generation of thy children" describes the pious as the progeny of the Father on high. In these places the word translated "children" is the same as that translated "sons" in the passage with which we have to do. It was because of such Old Testament ideas that our Lord, in response to the Jew who had asked, † "How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter a second time into his mother's womb and be born?" could rejoin, "Art thou a master in Israel and knowest not yet these things?" In the New Testament the use of the phrase, "sons of God," runs throughout the volume. Men in whom God has engendered a spirit of piety are denominated children of God, as if persons born a second time. It may be objected that the contrast between the phrases, "sons of God" and "daughters of man," implies that *the sons of God* were not sons of man as well. The contrast conveys such a meaning in seeming only. A Psalmist says, when speaking of the godless persons who were in prosperity, "They are not in trouble, as other men, neither are they plagued like other men." In that passage the phrase translated "other men" is precisely the same as the phrase "man"

* Ps. lxxiii. 15.

† John iii. 4, 10.

in the place with which we have to do. Had our translators inserted the word "other" before the word men in Genesis vi., as they do in Psalm lxxiii.,* they would have given the sense of our passage altogether in conformity with the Hebrew idiom, and would have removed that appearance of contrast which to many appears so difficult.

The passage proceeds: "My Spirit will never rule in man. In their going astray they are flesh." The meaning seems to be that in the human race the fleshly had so predominated over the spiritual, the intermarriage of the sons of God with the daughters of man had so disappointed the prospect of improvement, as to make the case morally hopeless unless some judgment, such as is mentioned a little further on (the judgment of the deluge) should be inflicted.

As to the language, "his days shall be an hundred and twenty years," it is the days of the race, not the days of an individual—the days which were to intervene for man before the signal judgment—that are intended.

The narrative proceeds in the English Bible with the sentence, "There were giants in the earth in those days." The "days" meant in this part of the narrative are no doubt the days when men began

* Ps. lxxiii. 5; compare Jud. xvi. 7, 11.

to multiply on the face of the earth, and the fact stated is, that in those days, after as well as before the godless intermarriages, this race of men had lived and were describable as the mighty men which were from of old the men of renown. These "giants" may have been like the Patagonian race, men of unusual height and extraordinary muscular development. They may have been giants even in the popular acceptation of this phrase. But there is nothing in the word Nephilim, the Hebrew word used in the place with which we have to do, that shuts us up to the supposition that the phrase imports the idea of gigantic stature. It is true that the spies sent by Joshua to reconnoitre the land of Canaan say, "There we saw the Nephilim, and we were in their sight as grasshoppers." But it was a false report which they brought concerning the land, and the falsity of the account they gave seems to have consisted mainly in exaggerations. The word Nephilim, if judged by cognate Hebrew words, imports the notion of falling. Some of the ancient translators of the Pentateuch (where only the phrase occurs) translate it as meaning men that fall upon you, men of violence. It is doubtful whether the term ought to be translated at all; whether it ought not to be treated like proper names, and to be merely transliterated. Distin-

guished Hebraists hold that the word is of the nature of a Gentile noun, like the name Titans among the Greeks. As this name was by ancient Greeks interpreted by means of a cognate word which conveys the notion of outstretching, and was held to owe its origin to the fact that the race so-called outstretched their arms for purposes of violence, so the Nephilim may have received the designation the sacred writer gives them because they *fell upon* their fellow-men. It seems to be because the class of men which is meant needed as early as the time of Moses to be identified to the minds of his readers that this sacred writer explains, "The same are the mighty men which from of old are the men of renown." Owing to such facts, the revisers of the authorized version render the sentence with which we are concerned, "The Nephilim were in the earth in those days." It is as if a modern historian should name the Aztecs, and thinking the designation to be unfamiliar to his readers, should explain that the race dominant in Mexico before the arrival of the Spaniards were the people meant by the unfamiliar name.

Thus much is certain: that oppression drives even a wise man mad, and that the deluge is described as having occurred because the earth was filled with violence through men. Moreover, the

Nephilim, as well as the intermarriage of sons of God with daughters of man, appear in the account as antecedents to that overflowing and rampant wickedness which gave occasion to the flood ; as factors in bringing about that judgment from which only Noah and his family escaped. The history is incoherent unless the meaning is that the antecedent and the consequent stood to each other in the relation of cause and effect. This relation, therefore, may be taken for granted. The Nephilim were oppressors. Their oppression maddened men. Violence was no doubt returned to violence. The wickedness of man was great in the earth. "Every work of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually."

To pass from things curious to things practical : in the family no influence exceeds that of the wife and mother. It usually makes or mars the character of the offspring. The suasion of the maternal lips, the supplications of the maternal heart, the maternal example, who but God fully knows their influence ? If the wife is unspiritual, the husband becomes such, if he was not such before ; and the children, with such blood in their veins, such influences operating upon their souls, grow up with characters not religious. It was the intermarriage of the godly with the godless, the fact that "sons

of God saw daughters of man, that they were fair, and took them wives of whomsoever they chose," that brought about the Divine utterance, "My Spirit will never rule in man," and the oracle which limited the days of the race to one hundred and twenty years. Beware how you marry!

It has appeared that before the death of Enos there was a need that men should begin anew to call upon the name of the Lord. In like manner, before the deluge, all flesh had corrupted its way, and in consequence, mankind, with the exception of eight persons, needed to be swept away by the waters of the flood. The same tendency to degenerate appears again and again in the Scriptural history of men. Before the call of Abraham the descendants of the family which survived the deluge had so deteriorated that the call of Abraham became necessary for the preservation of religion. Before the carrying away of the Israelites to foreign countries, these descendants of Abraham had so degenerated as to require this signal scourge—the carrying away. If the scourge had the effect of reclaiming this people from their idolatry, the place of image worship, and the vices which go along with idolatry, was taken by formality and hypocrisy before the coming of Christ. Before the Reformation new shapes of image

worship, with priestcraft and the making void the Word of God by traditions of men, became rife.

This tendency to degenerate could not exist in the race if it did not exist in the individual. Who but finds such a tendency in himself? Whose zeal does not cool? Whose conversion does not need to be repeated? What Christians but feel as applicable to themselves the language of an Apostle, "My children, with whom I travail in birth *again* until Christ be formed in you?" Beware of the tendency to degenerate. We must check this tendency or perish. Daily, more than daily, let us call to mind our past hours. Let us not be satisfied unless we have improved. Let us by prayer breathe out aspirations and breathe in the Spirit of God.

CHAPTER III.

GOD WRESTLING AND WRESTLED WITH.

GENESIS XXXII. 24-32.

THE conduct of Jacob toward his brother Esau had been atrocious, and the ferocity of Esau had vented itself in the exclamation, "The days of mourning for my father are at hand, then will I slay my brother Jacob." Rebecca, the mother, said to her offending son, "Thy brother Esau, as touching thee, doth comfort himself, purposing to slay thee; arise, flee to my brother Laban, and tarry there a few days; tarry there a few days, I say, until thy brother's wrath be turned away; then will I send and fetch thee thence." Jacob thus came to leave his father's house for a foreign country, virtually an exile. He continued to be an exile for twenty years, during which he became the object of envy and suspicion: Trouble after trouble came upon him. At a subsequent time, when he described the condition in which he had lived these years, he did it in the

words, "In the day the drought consumed me and the frost by night."

Adversity, however, had not cured Jacob of his faults. When he returned to the land of Canaan, Esau's purpose to slay him continued, for aught he knew or had reason to believe ; and Esau had become far more powerful than himself ; if his mother had bidden him to tarry abroad after his flight until she sent him word and fetched him thence, no message that his brother's wrath had turned away had reached the patriarch ; on the contrary, when Jacob was on his homeward way, the tidings were, "Esau cometh to meet thee, and with him four hundred men." What could the "plain man" with women and children to protect, with male attendants comparatively few, effect against the "man of the field" followed by such a force ? The danger was great, and Jacob's sense of it was intensified by his conscience. No means of defence being within reach, every prop being knocked from under him, he had recourse to Him who had promised to bring him in safety to the land of his father, and who, notwithstanding his demerit, had performed the promise—"God of my father Abraham, God of my father Isaac ! O Lord which saidst unto me, Return unto thy country and to thy kindred, and I will do thee good. I am not worthy of the least of all Thy mercies and of all the

truth which Thou hast shown unto Thy servant. . . . Deliver me, I pray Thee, from the hand of my brother, from the hand of Esau : for I fear him, lest he come and smite me, the mother with the children." Night came. Both natural light and the light of prosperity had disappeared, and then occurred the transaction related in the words, "Jacob was left alone ; and there wrestled a Man with him until the breaking of the day. And when He [the wrestler] saw that He prevailed not against him, He touched the hollow of his thigh, and the hollow of Jacob's thigh was strained, as He wrestled with him. And He [the wrestler] said, Let me go, for the day breaketh. And he [Jacob] said, I will not let Thee go, except Thou bless me." The patriarch had been an ill-deserving man. A judgment upon his body was needed to remind him of the fact. The "sinew of the hip which is upon the hollow of the thigh" showed the effect of the touch of "the Man." When the sun rose, Jacob limped. "He halted upon his thigh." The infliction may have been prospective as well as retrospective in its import. It may have been intended as premonitory of the lot which caused him to say at the close of his earthly existence,* "Few and evil have been the years of my pilgrimage." Nevertheless he was

* Gen. xlvii. 9.

to subserve a Divine purpose in the interest of mankind. After the occurrence which had made the preceding night forever notable, he did not sin in such ways or to such a degree as he had sinned previously to the signal vision, and this event may have been the turning point in his career.

Who was the Man that wrestled with Jacob? He must have been more than man, for when the scene was ended, Jacob recognized Him as the Source of blessing, and exclaimed, "I have seen God." What was the meaning of the transaction? What of the wrestling? In what sense is it said of the Wrestler that He saw that he prevailed not? What was the meaning of the touch and of the language, "Let me go, for the day breaketh?"

The vision was a representation of Jacob's past and present, as seen from the Divine point of view. When Jacob, with unworthy stratagem, had contended with his brother for the paternal blessing; the contest in Jacob's estimation had been with a fellow-man, with ill-fortune, and on the side of prophecy,* which had said of the two brothers "The elder shall serve the younger." The contest had been really a struggle with duty and with God. When blow after blow had fallen on Jacob—the peril at home, the necessity of fleeing, the discom-

* Gen. xxv. 23.

fort of banishment, the failure of the message promised by his mother, the tidings received on his homeward journey, the terror at his brother's approach—the blows might seem to Jacob as from chance, from ill-luck or blind nature; they really were blows from God. This was the thing signified, the aspect which was put on Jacob's late history, when there wrestled a Man with him until the breaking of the day. God had contended with him as he had contended with God. What is the meaning of the statement, that "the Man" saw that He prevailed not? The means the Man had used, the force He had thus far put forth, had been unequal to the persistency of him with whom the Man had struggled. Going from the sign to the thing signified—God had chastised Jacob, but Jacob had not been broken by the chastisement. God had not prevailed with the soul of Jacob, to the point of prostrating the patriarch.

An expert and powerful wrestler, though he shall for a time permit him with whom he struggles to hold his own, may at length prove the skill the wrestler possesses by totally disabling his antagonist with a single blow skilfully directed. With the thigh dislocated or strained, what can an antagonist do? "When the Man saw that He prevailed not against him, he touched the hollow of Jacob's

thigh, and the thigh of Jacob was strained." Unable to wrestle any longer, Jacob clings ; he has a hold upon the feet or other part of the person of the Man, and will not relax his grasp, as appears from the words of the Man, "Let me go, for the day breaketh." This was to signify the reduction of pride, the ceasing to struggle with God, the clinging to God in prayer, which took place when Jacob wept and made the confession and supplication, "Oh God of my father Abraham, I am not worthy of the least of Thy mercies ! Deliver me from my brother, from Esau, lest he slay me and slay the mother with her children."

The patriarch's true strength, which lay in conscious helplessness and dependence, at length appeared. Day was about to dawn upon his night when the night was at its darkest. Ere the next twelve hours were over, Esau, marvellously and perhaps suddenly changed, was to meet him, but far from falling upon him with his four hundred men, was to embrace him, to fall on his neck and kiss him. When a turn in a man's affairs so cheering takes place, it sometimes breaks the tie between him and the Divine author of the turn. The man thus blessed ceases to cling to God. To bring this truth to the surface, to forewarn Jacob that he might encounter such temptation, may be the thing

signified by the words of the superhuman Wrestler, "Let me go, for the day breaketh."

We have seen that Jacob had long striven with God with a bad persistency. We have seen also that when the Wrestler had prostrated him, when Jacob piteously confessed his worthlessness, when his heart gave forth the supplication, God of my father Abraham, I am not worthy, but deliver me, he strove with his Maker in a sense far different. Henceforward Jacob's name must be new. He had in the second strife striven with God prevailingly, and this prevailing strife with God involved a prevailing with Esau and the four hundred men whom and whose affections God overruled. God "blessed him there" and said, "Thy name shall be called Israel, because thou hast striven with God and men, and hast prevailed." The new name was compounded of two words, one signifying strife, the other signifying God, the compound importing a struggle to which the Divine Being was a party.

Jacob has begun to perceive the meaning of the vision. The truth reaches him that the Wrestler, was no other than the Source of his past troubles, no other than the Source of the blessing which he needs for the future. If he has had a hold at the feet of Him who had given the decisive touch at the

hollow of the thigh, he has asked, as if of his Maker, that he may retain this hold, "I will not let Thee go until Thou bless me." When he inquires for the name of the "Man" of the vision, this is only to make assurance doubly sure, and the Wrestler gives the desired reassurance in the significant question, Wherefore is it that thou dost *ask* after My Name? But the place of the vision, as well as Jacob, must receive a new designation. It must take the name Peniel (presence or face of God), because after the vision Jacob could and did testify, "I have seen God face to face and my life is preserved." His life had been preserved with a preservation so surpassing that he met his injured brother with forgiveness on the part of the latter, and with more than safety to himself. He in whose hands are all human hearts delivered Israel not only from harm and the apprehension of harm from his brother, but from even the desire to inflict harm, in the soul of the wronged Esau. What wonder that Jacob should provide that the place and its name should from age to age call to the minds of the future occupants of the land the signal events which the locality had witnessed—God striving with the patriarch, and long striving without prevailing in the strife—God at length reducing the patriarch so that this person began a new kind of strife, viz., the strife in

which the striver rejoices in having and keeping a hold on the feet of him with whom he strives — God at last prevailed with and pronouncing, Thou hast striven with God and men, and hast prevailed.

CHAPTER IV.

THE SENSE OF RIGHT AND WRONG

GENESIS XXXVII., XLII.

THE brothers of Joseph were envious, malignant and murderous. Yet when one of their number said, "Let not our hand be upon him, for he is our brother and our flesh," the rest were moved. A chord within them answered to this touch. When disaster came upon them, conscience proved its existence in the exclamations, "We are verily guilty concerning our brother in that we saw the distress of his soul when he besought us ; and we would not hear ! Therefore is this distress come upon us. Behold his blood is required. God hath found out our iniquity." Such ideas of guilt and penal consequences are familiar to us. But what is the source of such ideas ? Are they an outcome of revelation, or does revelation take their existence for granted, and build upon them the structure it rears ? Many persons do not care to enter into such in-

quiries, but to others they seem fundamental, and, in this age of scepticism, important to be met.

I. The words "paternal," "maternal" and "filial" originally denote relations merely—the relation of a father, of a mother, of a son; but they pass into a secondary meaning; they import a conduct *becoming* to the relation of a father, mother or son. This passage into a secondary meaning obtains in languages otherwise very different, as if men however unlike in most respects concurred in the feeling that a *duty* grows out of such relations. A man cannot be a father or a son without incurring obligations in virtue of this fact, and the perception of this truth is so general that it affects the application of words.

In like manner "right," a word originally signifying perpendicular or horizontal straightness, and "wrong," a word allied to "wring," and having the idea of distortion for its original meaning—these words and their synonyms in foreign languages are with remarkable unanimity applied to things invisible, the one to moral rectitude, the other to moral obliquity. The words "beauty" and "ugliness" are used in a similar manner in the languages of mankind. From denoting what is outward and bodily, they come to mean a thing not to be seen by the outward eye, viz., a quality inward and

spiritual. If it is plain that the unanimity exhibited in the speech of races which never meet each other cannot be of a conventional origin, whence does it come ? The same question may be asked with relation to other facts. All human beings have a consciousness of freedom, of freedom to do or leave undone an act to which they are tempted. And they have a sense of responsibility or consciousness of qualification to be called to account. When told a tale, they feel dissatisfied if the story "ends badly ;" and by ending badly, what do they mean ?

The facts tend toward the belief that the soul has perceptions which are not dependent on the eye strictly so called. It perceives ugliness in character somewhat as the outward eye is sensible of ugliness in faces or forms, and thus it is that men in different ages and countries unite in using one and the same word in a twofold acceptance. Seldom is it that the history of a phrase is insignificant. Human beings possess in virtue of the constitution of their nature an internal sense—comparable to the external sense of stench or fragrance—a sense which could hardly exist if it had not been communicated by the creative power ; any more than a man could recognize in a thing the quality of sweetness or bitterness, if the man were

without a palate. A perverted taste may put bitter for sweet or sweet for bitter, but no person is to be found who does not perceive a character of bitterness or the contrary as resident in some things, alike in the physical and in the spiritual domain. If there are tribes of men who hold that it is wrong for a woman to survive her husband, and right that she should immolate herself in honor of him, this fact shows that these tribes concur with the sentiment of mankind generally, viz., the sentiment that a quality of rectitude or its contrary resides in human actions. It shows also that they have a sense of the truth that the conjugal relation involves a duty devolving upon persons who are parties to this relation, although it exemplifies the undeniable truth that the sentiment may express itself in an exaggerated way. It is to be confessed that other phenomena make it undeniable that such moral sentiments are everywhere counteracted by adverse influences belonging to our nature, and that to a most melancholy extent. It cannot be denied that the sense of right and wrong requires to be educated, in order to reach an elevated condition. It is in this respect like the reasoning power, a power inborn in man generally and absent in idiots only. Processes of instruction are requisite to develop and fortify

both the moral and the intellectual faculties, but neither the one nor the other of these faculties could be fortified or evolved if it had not existed previously. Could you engender conscience in an ox?

If the above representations are true, they are important. Inasmuch as they prove that men have a nature which makes them susceptible of being called to account, they render it probable, antecedently to revelation, that there is a judgment to come, and they confirm the revelation when it arrives. The inborn tendency to recognize conduct as worthy of reward or punishment, of approbation or disapprobation is that which makes us capable of religion. But for this nature, we could see no impropriety in predicating righteousness of a machine; we should not feel the want of such a word as righteousness.

2. There are Christians—strange to say—who controvert the main position of this chapter on Biblical grounds. They allege that the Scriptures teach that men are by nature in darkness. In this allegation there is an element of truth, but let it be remembered that there is scarcely any outward darkness so thick that it is equivalent in its effects to a want of eyes. Where total darkness exists, no man who stumbles can be punishable or blame-

worthy for the stumbling. Such is the case in the inward, the spiritual sphere. Otherwise, how could Christ declare "If ye were blind, ye should have no sin." "They seeing, see not, and hearing, hear not." Devout men sometimes allege that to hold that men originally possess a moral sense is to dignify human nature, and that the Bible, on the contrary, degrades this nature. The truth is, the Bible often dignifies the human nature. What is the tendency of the utterance, "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness, and let them have dominion over the fowl of the air and over the cattle," unless the passage means that human beings were to be qualified for dominion over other beings by the possession of a God-like nature? What means the utterance, "Thou hast made man a little lower than the angels"? and what means the exhortation, "Quit you like men"? It is in dignifying human nature on one of its sides that the Bible degrades it in another of its aspects.

It is in attributing to men faculties which the book does not attribute to beasts, faculties less, but only less, than angelic, that the Scriptures bring down the self-justifying spirit, and draw from human breasts the confession of guiltiness. Jurists hold that idiocy makes a person incapable of committing a crime. If idiocy is pleaded for a man-

killer, you must deny the truth of the plea, and so doing must dignify the culprit, before you can bring him to the gallows. A British officer known to story felt that a principle analogous to this appertained to the moral as distinguished from the legal sphere. Moved by compunction for a life of sin, he exclaimed on seeing a dog enter a room in which he sat, "Would that I were that animal!" The man believed that an animal had no sense of right or wrong and no consciousness of responsibility, was in this respect his inferior, and *therefore* was better than himself—better and deserving to be better off.

The existence of a natural moral faculty underlies the fact that Scripture uses moral principles, without first revealing those principles. An example of such use—of an appeal to a moral principle not preceded by a revelation of the principle—occurs in the earliest parts of the Book of Genesis. Think of the language to Cain, "What hast thou done? the voice of thy brother's blood crieth unto me from the ground; and now art thou cursed from the earth, which hath opened her mouth to receive thy brother's blood from thy hand." What means this iteration of the word brother? It assumes that it was already well understood that to shed the blood of a brother was something peculiarly

atrocious. Yet this moral principle had not been matter of revelation. A little further on in the Scriptural narrative, the Divine Voice declares, "At the hand of every man's brother will I require the life of man. Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed, for in the image of God made he man." I do not dwell upon the facts that this language conflicts with the opinion that the Divine image in man ceased at the fall of Adam, that this remarkable utterance was made many centuries after that fall, and that the substance of the apothegm is given anew in times as late as the age of St. James.* Significant as these facts are, let me at present limit myself to the question—it may seem too simple to require an answer and yet it ought to be put—How can life be required when it has been destroyed? It is plainly implied that the life of a slain man would be required in an equivalent, that is to say, in a penalty. If a truth nowhere revealed in express words, namely, that sin must be paid for, is here assumed, the case is the same throughout the Scriptures. "His mischief shall return upon his own head. His violent dealing shall come down upon his own pate." "We must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that every one may receive the things done

* James iii. 9.

in his body." "He that doeth wrong shall receive the wrong that he hath done."* In which last place the English Bible introduces the word "for" without warrant from the original, and to the detriment of the significance of the passage. Passages of this description go upon the supposition that ill-doing and suffering belong together, and that this truth is evident of itself. But it is not thus evident unless it is a primary truth, that is to say, unless the soul has a sense which perceives this truth immediately, without waiting to be apprised of it, or to learn it by a process of reasoning. Moreover the doctrine of a moral sense underlies the Scripture praises of God. "God is good! true and righteous are His ways!" "True and righteous are thy ways, O King." "Thou only art holy." Such language abounds throughout the Bible. Does it not imply that there is a standard of goodness and truth with which the conduct of God may be compared, and that the soul has a sense of this standard, somewhat as the palate has a sense of taste, and the nose a sense of fragrance? Still further the existence of a moral sense underlies the doctrine of Scripture respecting the heathen.† "When the Gentiles which have not the law do by nature the things contained in the law, these

* Col. iii. 25.

† Rom. ii. 14, 15.

having not the law are a law unto themselves, which show the work of the law written in their hearts, their consciences excusing or else accusing." It is here plainly taught that if by nature we are children of wrath—if men have a lower nature, through the power of which they yield to temptation, they have also a higher nature; that this is the case even with the Gentiles, the heathen; that the word of the law is written on even pagan hearts; in other words, that there is a universal conscience, although the beings who have this conscience find a law in their members that warreth against the law of their mind. It may be owing to the universal sense of the reprehensible and its contrary that the public sentiment is sometimes better than that of a tempted individual, that the voice of even a heathen community is to be taken into consideration, when one would estimate his duties; that an apostle when writing to Christians who lived in the midst of paganism, could say, * "Whatsoever things are honorable, . . . whatsoever things are of good report, think on these things." Some have thought it strange that what is of good report in the world should be commended to the thought of Christians. But consider when a prospective hardship does not tend to

* Philip iv. 8.

deter, when the hope of gain does not attract, when passion does not infuriate, the voice of conscience is most able to make itself heard. These deterring, attracting and infuriating influences are often absent from the heart of the public in junctures at which they are present to the feelings of a member of the community, and for these reasons an apostle could recommend to a disciple perplexed between "the law of his mind" and "the law in his members," that he should consider what was "honorable and of good report." The general sentiment even if in ordinary cases not so good as a man's own sentiment, might at times be better, might deserve to be at least thought upon, and when thought upon, might come to be echoed in himself. Do not despise the public conscience.

A distinguished sceptic said to a friend whom he had invited to dinner, "Try this mutton, you will find it very virtuous." What he meant was plain enough. He did not believe in any virtue distinguishable from utility, or tendency to produce certain consequences. He held that merit and demerit were but names. Does not the unperverted human soul revolt at scepticism of this description? Did this philosopher in all his moods fail to distinguish between merit and palatableness? Did he always confound the obligatory with the politic?

Would he deny that the ring of truth sounds in the quaint aphorism, "Honesty is the best policy ; but if a person deals honestly out of policy only, he is not an honest man" ? Let me beware of the conjecture that all ideas of blamableness and approbation are merely factitious, manufactured, coined for the sake of their consequences. Their tendency to produce desirable consequences is undeniable ; but this tendency can hardly produce its best effects, if the ideas are held to be mere conventionalisms. Recognize the ideas as outcomes of the structure of your minds, the spontaneous issues of the work of the Creator, the likeness of God in man. The Divine Being has not left himself without witness in the make of my soul. Show me the tribute money. Whose image and superscription is this ? If the image and superscription stamped on a coin showed in what authority it originated and to what quarter it might allowably go as revenue, the image and likeness stamped on my soul is no less significant. The former thing showed that the coinage was merely human, imported no religious obligation and might be rendered where the powers that existed demanded its payment. The latter thing, the sense of right and wrong imprinted on the inner man, "the law of my mind," binds me to pay unto God the tribute of adoration and well-doing.

CHAPTER V.

ZION.

I CHRON. XI. 5-8 ; XIV. 1 ; XV. 1-3.

ZION is the highest of the hills, or rather mountains, on which Jerusalem is built. It was next to impregnable and was inaccessible to Israel for centuries subsequent to the age of Moses. Its name occurs so frequently in the utterances of Psalmists and Prophets as to make it important to attend to the history of the place and to the aspects and associations in which the name appears.

The first of the passages indicated at the head of this chapter states that David captured the mountain and built for himself a house thereon, as also that the hill came accordingly to be known as "the City of David." The place was largely occupied by houses ; but it could be denominated a city without regard to this fact—any place which had the character of a stronghold being in the dialect of the Bible, from the time of Cain

onward, describable as a city. Moreover, the name Zion is often used with such latitude as to include the whole of Jerusalem.

For centuries after the time of David the descendants of this monarch continued to occupy the hill which in the stricter acceptation was called Zion. Zion was the seat of the palace of David's successors for some twenty generations. There these descendants of David held court. On Zion they were born, and there they gave birth to their children. This use of the hill as the seat of the Davidic dynasty certainly obtained in the time of the Prophet Micah. Nevertheless Micah does not describe Zion as destined to be the birthplace of that great scion of the dynasty whose kingdom was to begin in the land of Israel and therefrom to extend. After describing Zion as subjected again and again to vicissitudes, and after proceeding to address the citizens of the kingly hill as needing to put themselves on the defensive, as moving in troops, beleaguered by enemies and insulted in the person of their judge or king, the prophet brings Bethlehem into view—Bethlehem, to which the family of David had belonged before any of its members had risen to a royal condition. Micah,* while addressing

* Micah v. 1, 2, revised version, which is the translation mostly followed in these chapters.

Zion, writes: "Now shalt thou gather thyself in troops . . . He hath laid siege against us. They shall smite the judge of Israel with a rod upon the cheek. But thou Bethlehem Ephratah which art little to be among the thousands of Judah, out of thee shall one come forth unto me that is to be ruler in Israel; whose goings forth are from of old, from everlasting." The fact that the assurance is given to the family of David as having its homestead at Bethlehem and not to the family as having its palace on Zion, is significant. And the significance appeared when he which "was made of the seed of David according to the flesh" was born in comparative poverty. The condition of the house of David at the time of the birth of the great member of this house, bore such a comparison with the condition which the family had enjoyed in the time of the prophet Micah, as a country town inhabited by none but subjects bears to the kingly city—to the capital of the monarchy to which the town belongs. The family had come down to the condition of private citizens. Bethlehem reached a dignity among "the thousands" of Israel, which it had not previously possessed, but reached this dignity because a manger belonging to it was the place where the infant Messiah was laid, and because of nothing else.

To proceed from thoughts which arise from the comparison of Zion with Bethlehem, think of the sacred mountain as compared with Shiloh. If the first of the historical sentences indicated at the head of this chapter shows how Mount Zion came to be the civil capital of the Israelitish tribes, the second and third of the passages show how it became their ecclesiastical capital, and could be called by Prophets and Psalmists,* “the city of our solemnities,” “the city of God.” When the hill was made the seat of the Sanctuary, it became “the place which God had chosen to put His name there,”† the spot where worship conducted by means of sacrifices should be offered, the central spot whither three times in every year all the males of Israel must go. The city Shiloh had been for much of the interval between Joshua and David the spot thus honored. But Shiloh in the latter part of this interval lost this sacredness. Hence, when prophets would predict such loss of sacredness on the part of Zion ; when they represent the Israelites of their time as regarding the possession of Zion in the light of a safeguard to them in the midst of their sins ; when seers announce that the place upon which the people reposed their trust was destined, because of the people’s sins, to be deserted by the Divine

* Isaiah xxxiii. 20; Psalm lxxxvii. 3.

† Deut. xii. 5, 6.

Being and to become a ruin ;—these prophets compare the destiny which was to befall the sacred hill to the allotment which had befallen Shiloh—"Go ye now unto my place which was in Shiloh, where I caused my name to dwell at the first ; and see what I did to it for the wickedness of my people Israel. And now, because ye have done all these things, saith the Lord, and I spake unto you, rising up early and speaking, but ye heard not ; and I called you, but ye answered not, therefore will I do unto this house which is called by my name, wherein ye trust, and unto the place which I gave to you and to your fathers, as I have done to Shiloh." *

The principle which lies at the basis of such Old Testament utterances is that the Divine Being is always the same, and so the same when a new cause for desecrating a sanctuary occurs, as he was when an old cause for conduct of this sort took place. Is not this principle the thing taught in the remarkable name, "I am that I am?" Would not this title run, if exhibited in full, "I am at all times that which I am at any time—ever faithful to my antecedents—ever sure to develop myself in the future as I have developed myself in the past?" If the wickedness of Israel made its Sanctuary an object of disgust to God in one age, like wickedness of the

* Jer. vii. 12-14.

people could not but produce a like result in another age, on the supposition that God was to be consistent with Himself. This is the moral of the Old Testament history. This was the moral taught by the reproduction of the ruin of Shiloh, which occurred when, under God, the Babylonians in one generation and the Romans in another laid waste the hill of Zion. Jeremiah pointed this moral in advance, by the comparison of Zion to Shiloh. And in nothing do the prophets more abound, than in the representation that the past must revive in the future, under the administration of the God of Israel. They with especial frequency represent that if in His dealings with His people He vouchsafed to make a place both His and theirs, then if they profaned the place by their abominations, He must profane it in another sense. "Behold, I will profane my sanctuary, the pride of your power, the desire of your eyes."*

To go back to the times when Zion had not come to be eclipsed by Bethlehem or to incur the lot which Shiloh had suffered. The hill, after becoming the site of the Sanctuary, is often represented as having become a home, a home common to God and to Israel. It is spoken of as the Divine dwelling-place; for example where it is said: † "I am the Lord your God dwelling in Zion." In other

* Ezek. xxiv. 21.

† Joel iii. 17.

passages the sacred mount is represented as the dwelling-place of God's people ; for example, in the utterance " O my people that dwellest in Zion." * The representation—God dwelleth in Zion—co-exists with a less figurative statement—to the effect that God is in Heaven and His people upon earth ; and the two things, the more figurative and the less figurative exhibition of the dwelling-place of God, are sometimes to be found within the same Psalm—Psalm xiv., for instance, where God is spoken of, both as looking down from Heaven upon the children of men, and as expected to give the salvation of Israel out of Zion. The conception of the place of the Sanctuary as a spot where the Divine Being domesticated Himself with Israel, and where Israel might be to God as guests, met the spiritual wants of an age and race which needed outward signs and symbols ; and the conception was authorized and invited in the words addressed to Moses, when this law-giver and the race which he headed were yet on the journey to Canaan.† " Let them make me a Sanctuary, that I may dwell among them . . . and there I will meet with the children of Israel." Psalmists seize on this idea, the idea of the Sanctuary as the House of God, wherein themselves and their children are entertained. Zion is the spiritual

* Isa. x. 24.

† Exod. xxv. 8; xxix. 43.

home, and the true Israelite is the inmate of this home. The worshipper domesticates himself with the Lord of the Sacred Hill, and from this Person, as from a hospitable host, he obtains safe keeping and nourishment.* “Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life : and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever.” “Who shall ascend into the hill of the Lord ? Or who shall stand in his holy place ? He that hath clean hands and a pure heart ; who hath not lifted up his soul unto vanity.” “One thing have I asked of the Lord, that will I seek after ; That I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the Lord and to inquire in His temple. For in the days of trouble He shall keep me secretly in His pavilion : in the covert of His tabernacle shall He hide me ; He shall lift me up upon a rock.” “Thou hast been a refuge for me, a strong tower from the enemy. I will dwell in thy tabernacle for ever. I will take refuge in the covert of thy wings.” In these passages the presence meant is hardly personal. On the part of the people it is a presence in spirit, and on the part of God it is a presence in power and efficacy.

From the time when the highest of the mountains on which Jerusalem was built became identifiable

* Ps. xxiii. 6; xxiv. 3-6; xxvii. 4-6; lxi. 3, 4.

with the worship of Jehovah and with the promises vouchsafed to the seed of David, the Sacred Hill, inasmuch as the whole of its new quality had come from God, could be conceived of as a site whereon the system of religion founded by the Lord was built, as a spot preferred by Him to the ordinary dwellings of His people, and as destined to be ultimately the spiritual birthplace of heathen nationalities in so full a sense that these tribes would become describable as born in Zion. Such is the glowing representation made in a Psalm* which looks forward to a census of mankind, a census which Jehovah is to take. God is to "write up" the races of men and the principle of the enrolment is to be the spiritual nativity of this and that of the races concerned. "His foundation is in the holy mountains. The Lord loveth the gates of Zion more than all the dwellings of Jacob. Glorious things are spoken of thee, O city of God. I will make mention of Rahab and Babylon as among them that know me. Behold Philistia and Tyre, with Ethiopia. This one was born there. Yea, of Zion it shall be said, this one and that one was born in her; and the Most High Himself shall establish her. The Lord shall count, when He writeth up the peoples, this one was born there." When heathen men and

* Ps. lxxxvii.

women in the time of the apostles were regenerated by the Gospel, they became, by their second birth, members of the chosen family—people belonging to Israel. The second birth might be figured as having taken place in Zion, with imagery not much bolder than that which occurs when America is described as the birthplace of republicanism.

This 87th Psalm is one of the Old Testament passages in which—if you exchange the sign for the thing signified, the figure for the thing figured—you perceive it to be written that repentance and remission of sins were to be preached unto all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. A thing, the same substantially, was taught when Mount Zion appeared in prophecy as a place where a banquet for mankind, an unveiling of the eyes of the nations, a victory over death, were destined to occur.* “In this mountain shall the Lord of Hosts make unto all peoples a feast of fat things, a feast of wines on the lees, of fat things full of marrow, of wines on the lees well refined. And He will destroy in this mountain the face of the covering that is cast over all peoples, and the veil that is spread over all nations. He hath swallowed up death.” A thing, the same in substance, was predicted when Zion of Jerusalem was exhibited as the place whence should

* Isa. xxv. 6-8.

issue the word of the Lord, and whither, as to a point of confluence, all races should come.* “In the latter days it shall come to pass that the mountain of the Lord’s house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and it shall be exalted above the hills, and peoples shall flow unto it. And many nations shall go and say, come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord and to the house of the God of Jacob; and He will teach us of His way, and we will walk in His paths; for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem. And He shall judge between many peoples, and shall reprove strong nations afar off; and they shall beat their swords into ploughshares, and their spears into pruning-hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more.”

In the New Testament the earthly Zion is superseded. Neither in Jerusalem nor on any mountain elsewhere are men to worship the Father with that ritual worship of which Zion in Jerusalem had been the appointed place. The type is eclipsed by the antitype—Zion has yielded its name to the place where Christ has sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high—the place whither Christians have gone in spirit. If those who have become converts

* Micah iv. 1-4.

to the system of religion of which Rome is the capital, may be said to have gone to Rome, what wonder that all those who have acceded to the system to which the heavenly Jerusalem is as the capital, are addressed as persons who have come unto Mount Zion. The Zion on high has become the metropolis of the Christian commonwealth, as the earthly Zion had been the capital of the commonwealth of Israel.* “Ye are come unto Mount Zion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to innumerable hosts of angels.” The new capital of the dynasty of David takes the name of the older seat of the sway of the race. Byzantium did analogously when, having become the place of the imperial sceptre, people began to give it the name of Rome.

To return to the Old Testament field. The seat of that system of institutions which, from the time of David, characterized religion; the centre to which, three times in every year, the men of Israel converged; the spiritual dwelling-place or home of all who were Israelites indeed, is often personified, although in the midst of the personification the thing—the place meant—often appears. The literal and the figurative are interchanged in a manner disallowed by modern rhetoric. Zion is personified as

* Heb. xii. 22.

a mother—a mother exiled from her home, wandering to and fro, bereaved of her older children, and thinking herself forgotten by her husband. An offspring, however, has been engendered for her. They gather to her in haste and in such numbers that her devastated land is too narrow for the new inhabitants.* Zion said, “Jehovah hath forsaken me, and the Lord hath forgotten me. Can a woman forget her sucking child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb? Yea, these may forget, yet will I not forget thee. Behold I have graven thee upon the palms of my hands; thy walls are continually before me. Thy children make haste; thy destroyers and they that made thee waste, shall go forth of thee. Lift up thine eyes round about, and behold: all these gather themselves together and come to thee. As I live, saith the Lord, thou shalt surely clothe thee with them all as with an ornament, and gird thyself with them, like a bride. For, as for thy waste and desolate places and thy land that hath been destroyed, surely now thou shalt be too strait for the inhabitants, and they that swallowed thee up shall be far away. The children of thy bereavement shall yet say in thine ears, The place is too strait for me: give place to me that I may dwell. Then shalt

*Isa. xlix. 14-22.

thou say in thine heart, 'Who hath begotten me these, seeing I have been bereaved of my children, and am solitary, an exile, and wandering to and fro? and who hath brought up these? Behold, I was left alone; these, where were they?' If in the New Testament two mothers appear, viz.: the Jerusalem that now is and is in bondage with her children and the Jerusalem above, which is the mother of us all, the imagery differs from that which presents itself to view in Isaiah xlix., where Zion is the only mother mentioned, and the former of the two families of children to which this mother had given birth is spoken of as lost. But if you pass from the figure to the thing figured, the meaning is the same in both cases. The idea is that of Jews repudiating their obligations, and, in consequence, suffering repudiation—Gentiles accepting the later revelation, and accepted as members of the household of faith. The natural branches of a good olive tree are cut off, and branches of a wild olive tree are grafted in. Children by adoption supply the place of such as had been children by descent from Abraham.

There is a personification of another kind. The phrase daughter of Zion often appears. The connection in places where the phrase occurs is enough to show that it exhibits the Israelites in

their collective capacity. The phrase daughter of Tyre exhibits the nation so called in the aspect of a population to which the soil of the Tyrians had given birth, and the case is of the same kind when the Israelites are addressed in a corresponding manner. They are accosted as a people, a people affiliated to the land of which Zion was the capital. Among the passages where Israel receives this title, is the remarkable place :* “ Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion ; shout, O daughter of Jerusalem : Behold, thy King cometh unto thee. He is just and having salvation ; lowly and riding upon an ass, even upon a colt, the foal of an ass. And I will cut off the chariot from Ephraim and the horse from Jerusalem, and the battle-bow shall be cut off, and he shall speak peace unto the nations ; and his dominion shall be from sea to sea and from the river to the ends of the earth.” Every part of this remarkable utterance ought to be compared with history. The sentence which concludes the utterance ought to be contemplated in connection with the fact that the territory of Israel was, according to Moses, to extend from the Mediterranean Sea to the River Euphrates. With evident allusion to these boundaries (which are often named elliptically, the one as the Sea, the other as the River), the territory of the

* Zech. ix. 9, 10.

King destined to come to the daughter of Zion is described as reaching from the Mediterranean to every other sea, and from the Euphrates to the extremities of the earth. The boundaries of the old territory are to become the lines wherefrom the new territory stretches. Such extension of the dominions of a dynasty hardly occurred in the time of Zechariah—hardly occurred in any ancient age—except by means of war. War was in those ages carried on by the chariot, the horse, and the bow of battle. The employment of these instrumentalities for warfare was to be cut off from the tribes of Israel, as in history it was cut off from them by Israel's ceasing to be a commonwealth, and with this incapacity for war on the part of the people of Zion there was to co-exist a dislike to war on the part of the King to come. He was to approach Zion of Jerusalem seated not upon an animal suitable for purposes of war, but upon a colt, the foal of an ass. He was not to declare war, but to speak peace to the nations. That Jesus Christ conformed to Zechariah's anticipations need not be said. When a multitude of the population born and bred on the Sacred Hill or its territory issued from Jerusalem, took branches of palm trees and proceeded to meet the great descendant of David ; when the multitude of them that went before and them that went after Christ,

shouted "Hosanna : * Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord ; Blessed is the kingdom that cometh, the kingdom of our father David ;" this multitude or many of the number, were unconscious of the full significance of the transaction in which they were engaged ; viz.: that they were responding to the call which had been spoken by Zechariah † " Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion ; shout, O daughter of Jerusalem." These things understood not the disciples at the first ; but when Jesus was glorified, then remembered they that these things were written of Him, and that they had done these things unto Him.

It was owing to the fact that the multitude which uttered these acclamations was but a small minority of the whole population of Zion, to the fact that the period during which Christ had visited, or was to visit, the once sacred place, was well-nigh ended, and to the fact that the destiny which the conduct of the mass of the people of the place had called down upon themselves was scarce forty years distant, that Jesus, within an hour after the acclamations, when He beheld the city, wept over it and said, " If thou hadst known in this day, even thou, the things which belong unto peace ! The days shall come upon thee, when thine enemies shall cast

* Mark xi. 9, 10.

† Zech. ix. 9, 10.

up a bank about thee, and compass thee round and keep thee in on every side, and shall not leave in thee one stone upon another ; because thou knewest not the time of thy visitation." In the time of its visitation by a power which unconsciously avenged Zion's ignoring its visitation by the Messiah, the city came to be ploughed as a field, and subsequently to be reduced for whole generations to the condition of a ruin. Armies of Rome erected mounds, beleaguered the city, demolished its houses and massacred its inhabitants, some two score of years from the day of the piteous forebodings uttered by Jesus Christ. All the Divine dealings are types, if by a type you mean an expression of a principle. God is at one time what He was at another. The desolation of Shiloh foreshadowed that desolation of Jerusalem which took place six centuries before the Christian era ; and the second desolation of this privileged place, which occurred Anno Domini 70, was but a new expression of the principle of the earlier devastation of the capital of the Holy Land : " You only have I known of all the families of the earth : therefore I will visit upon you all your iniquities." *

* Amos iii, 2.

CHAPTER VI.

MICAIAH, THE SON OF IMLAH.

I KINGS XXII. 1-37.

THE account of the ministry of Micaiah, the son of Imlah, is helpful to the study of the prophets. It brings into view several of the characteristics of prophecy, and throws some light upon the nature of the "vision" which the prophets claimed.

The facts of the account are as follows :

Jehoshaphat, of Judah, is in Samaria as a guest of Ahab, King of Israel. A city east of the Jordan, Ramoth-gilead by name, has been captured by Syria, and is now possessed by the latter power. Ahab proposes to undertake an expedition for the purpose of recovering Ramoth-gilead to his kingdom. He invites Jehoshaphat to join in his enterprise, and by way of recommending the undertaking to his guest, invokes counsel from the "prophets" of the court. One of these prophets is especially zealous. The horn is, with animals which possess

a horn, the seat of power and implement of offence. Hence it becomes a frequent figure of speech to import the idea of might. But the "prophet" Zedekiah, not content with naming the thing, manufactures its like in iron. Zedekiah made him horns of iron, and said to the king Ahab: "With these shalt thou push the Syrians until they be consumed."

Jehoshaphat is suspicious. He asks that he may hear a prophet who has not been of the company of Zedekiah. There is a prophet of this description. This man, Micaiah by name, is sent for. The messengers, creatures of Ahab, while Micaiah is on his way, inform him how Ahab wishes to be counselled. There is a way of exposing wishes or faults, by seeming to adopt or encourage them. This way may be used under certain circumstances and for a brief time, even when the thing meant is the opposite of the thing said. This ironical course was taken by Micaiah; but so soon as Ahab had shown himself too obtuse to perceive the irony, the prophet, faithful to his office, passing to good earnest, tells of a vision which had been vouchsafed him. "I saw all Israel scattered upon the mountains, as sheep that have no shepherd; and the Lord said, These have no master; let them return every man to his house in peace." The

king understands, and perceiving that Micaiah has by his parable taught that the projected expedition will terminate in death to himself and in disbanding to his army, repeats the complaint he had before uttered: "I hate him because he speaketh not good concerning me, but only evil." Whereupon the prophet gives utterance to another vision he had had; a vision which taught as by a parable under what promptings, and with what concurrence on the part of the Divine Being, Ahab's counsellors had acted, and how, without knowing the fact, they were enticing the monarch to his destruction. "I *saw* the Lord sitting upon his throne, and all the host of heaven standing on his right hand and on his left, and the Lord said, Who shall entice Ahab that he may go up and fall at Ramoth-gilead? . . . and there came forth a spirit and said, 'I will entice him . . . I will be a lying spirit in the mouth of all his prophets.'" The Spirit who thus "came forth and said," was no doubt the same as in the Book of Job is called Satan. The moral was taught when the prophet added, "And now behold! The Lord hath put a lying spirit in the mouth of all these thy prophets."

To pass from the facts to some comments thereupon.

In a manner visible to the ordinary eye, Israel had not been "scattered upon the mountains as sheep that have no shepherd." The scene had been intuitionally perceived, and was, as it was understood to be, of the nature of a parallel, rather mystical than "realistic." The like is true of the second seeing Micaiah tells of, the sight and hearing of the scene laid and the speeches made in heaven. It is denied* in express negations or in significant questions to be found again and again in Scripture, that God consults or advises with other beings. The scene or speeches had not been visible or audible to Micaiah's outward organs of sight or hearing. They had not occurred except to the inspired mind of Micaiah. A prophet owing to the fact that he claimed and was believed to be divinely gifted with extraordinary power of mental sight, took, in common with the class to which he belonged, that singular title, "the seer." The import of the representation made by Micaiah, though not misunderstood, was contemned. When it was vindicated by the event, men came to know that the influence which had inspired Ahab's prophets was an inspiration from the spirit of evil, and that the effect of the influence comported with the divine plans. Micaiah was thereby accredited

* Job xxi. 22 ; Isa. xl. 13, 14.

for other teachings which he might learn from "vision."

This was the course of things for which Moses* had provided. The prophet was to predict something for the nearer future, and if such a prediction should be verified by the event, then, and not otherwise, his statements regarding the more distant future and his teachings of a doctrinal kind were to be revered as authoritative.

As a people advances in cultivation, figures of speech become less common. Multitudes become capable of comprehending abstract ideas without being assisted by analogies ; and figures, which are nothing but analogues, become unnecessary. When used, they sometimes subject a speaker to contempt, as a mere rhetorician. But utterances of North American Indians bear witness to the fact that figures of speech are no invention of rhetoric. In the rude ages in which the prophets of the Bible spoke and wrote, symbols addressed to the eye, as well as metaphors addressed to the ear, were useful, and for the purpose of impression scarcely less than indispensable. Counterfeits copy realities. Because the counterfeit prophet Zedekiah was willing to do what real prophets did, he made for himself horns of iron. Ahijah, the Shilonite, had done the

* Deut. xviii. 21, 22.

like. He had rent his garments into twelve pieces, and given Jeroboam ten of the fragments, by way of signifying to the sight, the assurance which he gave to the ear, of the man who was to become the king of ten-twelfths of the empire of David. In a more cultivated age traces of the custom remained ; for example, in the case of Agabus :* “ There came down from Judæa a certain prophet named Agabus ; and coming to us, and taking Paul’s girdle, he bound his own feet and hands, and said, ‘ Thus saith the Holy Ghost. So shall the Jews at Jerusalem bind the man that owneth this girdle, and shall deliver him into the hands of the Gentiles.’ ”

With regard to the first utterance Micaiah made before Ahab, such irony as the seer used therein should be recognized elsewhere in the prophets. What but irony is present when Israel is reproached in the language, † “ Come to Bethel and transgress. At Gilgal multiply transgression ; for this liketh you, ye children of Israel ; ” or when Isaiah says to the people, ‡ “ Hear ye, indeed, but understand not, and see ye, indeed, but perceive not ; ” or when the same prophet is told, “ Make the heart of this people fat, and make their ears heavy, lest they hear with their ears, and understand with

* Acts xxi. 10, 11.

† Amos iv. 4, 5.

‡ Isa. vi. 9, 10.

their heart, and convert and be healed." The same mode of speaking is used occasionally by the Saviour. "The Scribes and Pharisees sit in Moses' seat. All, therefore, whatsoever they command you, that observe and do, but do ye not according to their works, for they say and do not."* It could be only for the purpose of giving point to the sarcasm, "They say and do not," that observance of every bidding of these religious teachers is required, since on other occasions, for instance in the matter of the Corban,† Christ represented the teaching of the Scribes and Pharisees as immoral, and making void the Word of God by their tradition. The antithesis between the Pharisaic saying and the Pharisaic doing is among the principal things condemned in the discourse introduced by the precept, "Whatsoever they command you, that observe and do."

That it was by an intuition that the prophets were believed to perceive the truth to which they were to give utterance, has already been said. This faith was sanctioned by Obadiah and Isaiah, when these prophets severally entitled their books, "The Vision of Obadiah," "The Vision of Isaiah which he saw." If you inquire whether the seers took steps whereby they invited commu-

* Matt. xxiii. 2, 3.

† Mark vii. 9-13.

nications from on high, or whether these communications reached them without being sought, your question does not admit of an answer applicable to all the cases. In the case of Micaiah there is no intimation that the things which had been "seen" by him had been made present to his intuition in consequence of a seeking of his own. Different were the cases of Elisha and Habakkuk. The former, when consulted by his king, sought the help of music to bring his soul into a condition of receptivity.* "Bring me a minstrel; and it came to pass when the minstrel played, that the hand of the Lord came upon him, and he said, Thus saith the Lord." Habakkuk † contemplates a Chaldean potentate as invading and ravaging Israel. This invasion scandalizes the mind of the prophet, because, ill-deserving as the Israelites are, the Chaldeans are no better, but are even worse. The prophet complains of his ignorance. By and by he learns the destiny of the wicked that swalloweth up the man who is more righteous than he; of the haughty man who enlargeth his desire as hell, who cannot be satisfied, but gathereth unto him all peoples, who, because he has despoiled nations, shall be himself despoiled for the violence he has done. Habakkuk is to write this destiny upon tablets, and

* II Kings iii. 15.

† Hab. i. 1, 2; ii. 8.

make the writing so large and legible that no person shall fail to decipher it. But no more than a deciphering can be expected at first. The inscription is to be like a modern catechism, printed in bold type, and intended to be read and remembered from the first, but hardly expected to speak its sense until maturity of age has arrived. The thing seen by the prophet will have to be waited for ; the intuition bides its time, will not be behind its time, and will take significance for the reader when this time (the time for fulfilment) shall have arrived, and not before. This period occurred when the ravagers of Israel became a people ravaged, when the scourge sent by God became a person scourged, when Belshazzar, king of the Chaldeans, was slain, his dynasty destroyed and his kingdom given to the Medes and Persians. The vision then took its meaning. In the time appointed to it, it spoke. And, to reach the point which is especially to my purpose, disentanglement from the prophet's mental difficulties, or capacity to administer hope to his hearers, did not come ; a vision did not arrive, even in an enigmatical form, until he ascended to a higher spiritual position ; until the inquirer, in order to descry the dawn of day, climbed, as it were, to an observatory, and put himself upon the look-out. Then first he perceived

how his complaint was to be met : "I will stand upon my watch, and set me upon the tower, and will look forth to see what he will speak with me, and what I shall answer concerning my complaint. And the Lord answered me and said, Write the vision, and make it plain upon tablets, that he may run that readeth it, for the vision is yet for the appointed time, and it hasteth toward the end, and shall not lie ; though it tarry, wait for it ; because it will surely come, it will not delay."

The feet of Asaph the seer had well-nigh slipped ; he had been in danger of falling from his faith in Providence, owing to his having seen the ungodly in prosperity and the godly in adversity. But he did not speak thus—he did not give utterance to his misgivings—before he received the spiritual insight which he could and did express in a psalm ; the psalm which rising above the creed recognized in his age, does not end without the confident ebullition, "Thou shalt guide me with thy counsel, and afterward receive me to glory." The insight which inspired the seventy-third psalm did not come until the seer had "gone into the sanctuary of God." Is any interpretation of these remarkable words more probable than that sense which does not need an interpreter ? In order to still his mis-

givings, to encourage his spirit to rise to a higher level, to woo the Spirit of God and obtain for himself the spiritual vision which his sacred ode expresses, this psalmist had betaken himself to the temple, and there, in the midst of its sublime associations—at night and in solitude perhaps—had received the power from on high, which enabled him to write with relation to his previous doubts,* “So brutish was I and ignorant : I was as a beast before Thee.” “Nevertheless I am continually with thee : Thou hast holden my right hand. Thou shalt guide me with thy counsel, and afterward receive me to glory. Whom have I in heaven but Thee ? And there is none upon earth that I desire beside Thee.”

“Prophecy,” in modern speech, hardly occurs except as expressive of prediction ; of a revelation respecting the future. How far this restriction of the word to utterances respecting time not yet arrived is distant from the Hebrew mode of speaking, appears in the insulting address of Jews to our Lord, “Prophecy unto us, thou Christ. Who is he that smote thee ?” The vision of Micaiah which exhibited a scene as if occurring in heaven, explained time present, viz., how it came to pass that Ahab’s counsellors were counselling him to his destruction.

* Ps. lxxiii. 22–25.

Similar as to time is the case in some other prophecies. A vision mentioned by Ezekiel * tells of things which were passing contemporaneously with the vision, although it differs from the representation made by Micaiah in this respect, that the vision obtained by Ezekiel tells of things disallowed by God which were taking place in an earthly country foreign to the country where Ezekiel at the time resided; whereas the vision obtained by Micaiah told of things divinely suffered and allowed, which at the time were taking place in the world of spirits. Sometimes prophecy relates to time past, as when the design leads the writer to turn up to view the hidden side of things; to exhibit the divine aspect of facts already known in their more profane aspect. This is certainly the case in the Book of the Revelation of St. John the Divine,† where the woman giving birth can be no other than the Israelitish people, the man-child no other than the Christ, the dragon no other than the power of darkness, and the taking up into heaven nothing else than our Lord's ascension. In a merely secular aspect the persons meant had already come to belong to history.

We have seen that in the words Micaiah subjoined to the parable which he had "seen," (the

* EZEK. viii. 1-8.

† REV. xii. 1-7.

words " Now, therefore, behold, the Lord hath put a lying spirit in the mouth of all these thy prophets, and the Lord hath spoken evil concerning thee,") Micaiah draws the inference which his vision had involved, and thus interprets the import of the vision. In some other cases the imagery of an intuition is reproduced without mention of its meaning, like Christ's curse of the barren fig-tree.*

In most of these cases the meaning was known to the writer, but the last vision given in the Book of Daniel is not only without an explanation, but is followed by a distinct acknowledgment that the writer needed an explanation for himself, and that when he asked for such relief to his mind, he was told not only that the thing meant was intended for times other than those then present, but that until the period called "the time of the end" arrived, the record of the vision was to be like an instrument of writing carefully enveloped and secured from inspection by wax and signet ; so far like an instrument of writing thus inclosed, that the record would fail to disclose its import either to the recorder or to other men, until the generation for whom it had been vouchsafed should have come. If modern men fail to understand the closing chapters of the Book of Daniel, the same was the case

* Mark xi. 12-14.

with Daniel himself. Habakkuk may have been able to expound his vision as early as the time when the vision was given, but to Daniel was granted neither the ability to expound nor the ability to understand.* “I heard but I understood not; then said I, O my Lord, what shall be the issue of these things? And He said, Go thy way, Daniel, for the words are shut up and sealed till the time of the end.”

* Dan. xii. 8, 9.

CHAPTER VII.

THE COVENANT WITH DAVID.

II SAM. VII. 12-17.

THE "last words of David" exhibit an ideal. They describe a conception of what the head of a people should be and of the benign influence upon others which a ruler answering the description would exercise. The words proceed to an acknowledgment that the house of the speaker, head and members, failed at the time then present to realize the ideal. The words proceed further to tell of a covenant, a covenant which the dying man could describe as the thing to which the desires of his soul converged, although this covenant was at the time like a plant stunted in growth or only in its germinal stage.

"The spirit of the Lord spake by me.

"And His word was upon my tongue.

"The God of Israel said.

“The Rock of Israel spake to me.

“One that ruleth over men righteously.

“That ruleth in the fear of God !

“He shall be as the light of the morning when
the sun riseth,

“A morning without clouds,

“When the tender grass springeth out of the
earth,

“Through clear shining after rain.

“Verily my house is not so with God.

“Yet he hath made with me an everlasting cove-
nant,

“Ordered in all things and sure.

“For it is all my salvation and all my desire,

“Although he maketh it not to grow.” *

The questions, What was the tenor of the covenant which had been made with David? What notices of this covenant are to be found in the prophets who lived in ages subsequent to that of this monarch? What expectations from this covenant for the two periods of which most of these writers speak (the earlier and the latter days) do the sacred seers entertain? What is the doctrine of the New Testament with respect to the hopes which the prophets cherished and expressed?—these are the questions to be now met.

* II Sam. xxiii. 2-5, revised version.

1. The answer to the question respecting the tenor of the covenant which David when about to die prized so highly, may be found in the historical passage indicated at the head of this chapter ; a passage repeated in substance at I Chronicles xvii. 1-15. The case may be stated as follows :

The divine Law-giver had declared that when Israel should have come into the possession of Canaan, there should be a place chosen by the Law-giver Himself, where and where alone the sacrifices of the law should be offered. Jerusalem had in the time of David been appointed as this place. The sanctuary had accordingly been transferred thither. But the sanctuary of the time was a tent, a movable tabernacle. Ought the sanctuary to continue to consist of a movable tent now that the place of the sanctuary had been made permanent ? To David it seemed incongruous, after he had erected for himself a stationary palace, that the symbolical residence of his God should be a structure less stable. The monarch said to the Prophet Nathan, " Behold, I dwell in a house of cedar, and the ark of the covenant of the Lord dwelleth between curtains." Touching the inquiry implied in this speech, Nathan had no commandment of the Lord. He gave advice with such authority as was to be respected, but was not final. In the night which followed, the

word of God came to Nathan, and it was to the effect that David had done well in cherishing the desire which had been in his heart, but that the gratification of the desire was not to be allowed him. An honor higher than that which the monarch had sought was at the same time promised ; the honor of becoming the founder of a dynasty which would be of everlasting duration. This covenant was made in phrases in which the word “seed” conveys the principal idea. “Seed” expresses the notion of a posterity rather than the notion of a single descendant. The covenant was to be fulfilled with regard to the building of a temple, by one and another of the individuals of the seed ; in one generation by Solomon and in another by Zerubbabel. With regard to other particulars, the promise might be forfeited by descendants of the forefather in age after age, but could not fail for one and all of these descendants. The race of David could not be set aside as the race of Saul had been. According to the covenant one or other of the members of the race of David must succeed this monarch in the headship over Israel which had been given to the family. If these statements are correct, the phrases of the promise, in order to be true to the facts, ought to be translated as follows : “When thy days be fulfilled, and thou shalt sleep

with thy fathers, I will set up thy seed after thee, which shall proceed out of thy bowels. And I will establish its kingdom. It shall build an house for my name; and I will establish the throne of its kingdom forever. I will be its father and it shall be my son. If it commit iniquity, I will chastise it with the rod of men, even with the stripes of the children of men—but my mercy shall not depart from it, as I took it from Saul, whom I put away before thee. And thy house and thy kingdom shall be made sure forever. According to all these words and according to all this vision, so did Nathan speak unto David.”

The doctrine of the Psalter construes the promise. Forfeitures of the covenant might occur, but the thing covenanted could not but arrive. David, in the person of one or other of his descendants, must reign from river to river and from sea to sea. If the moon in the heavens bears witness in its disappearances and renewed appearances to the dependableness of its Maker, so will the things covenanted to the seed of David bear witness to the dependableness of the Maker of this covenant.* “Thou spakest in vision to thy saints. And saidst, I have laid help upon one that is mighty; I have exalted one chosen out of the people. I have found David my servant.

* Ps. lxxxix. 19, 20, 27-37.

With my holy oil have I anointed him. I will make him my first-born, high over the kings of the earth. My mercy will I keep for him for evermore. And my covenant shall stand fast with him, and his seed will I make to endure forever, and his throne as the days of heaven. If his children forsake my law, and walk not in my judgments : if they break my statutes, and keep not my commandments ; then will I visit their transgression with the rod, and their iniquity with stripes. But my mercy will I not utterly take from him, nor suffer my faithfulness to fail. My covenant will I not break, nor alter the thing that is gone out of my lips. Once have I sworn by my holiness ; I will not lie unto David. His seed shall endure forever, and his throne as the sun before me. It shall be established forever as the moon, even the faithful witness in the sky."

2. What notices of the covenant made with David do we find in the prophets ? To understand these notices, it is necessary to bear in mind the well-known fact that in the diction of the Bible the name of the progenitor becomes a name common to the progeny. As Israel, a name originally given to the individual Jacob, comes to be used of the Israelites contemplated collectively, so Levi, originally the name of the forefather of the Levites, is

sometimes used as a designation of the whole tribe, when considered in their tribal character. The same is the case with the name David. It is applied to the race as well as to the founder of the race. It may include both the one and the other. Such a use of the word appears in the remarkable passage of Isaiah* (written centuries after the individual David had died), "Incline your ear and come unto me ; hear and your soul shall live, and I will make an everlasting covenant with you ; even the sure mercies of David. Behold I have given him for a witness to the peoples, a leader and commander to the peoples. Behold, thou shalt call a nation that thou knowest not, and a nation that knew not thee shall run unto thee because of the Lord thy God."

Here David is the prominent figure throughout. What is meant by the everlasting covenant, the sure mercies of David ? "Everlasting" points back to the "forever" which is iterated and reiterated in the covenant as uttered by the mouth of Nathan. "Sure" is applicable to the mercies of David, if the things meant were mercies had by David in promise. "Sure" was a word which would tend to recall Nathan's sentence, "Thy house and thy kingdom shall be made sure." But how can the

* Isa. lv. 3-5.

covenant with David be promised to peoples at large, to persons who, though inclining the ear and coming to God, were not of Davidic lineage? It can be thus promised if this covenant, besides importing dignity for the Davidic dynasty, implies blessedness for the subjects of this dynasty—as the promise of your daughter to a man may imply a benefit to her as well as a favor to him. The offer of the covenant to people at large construes the covenant and exhibits it as involving blessings for mankind generally, provided they accept the conditions on which the offer is made.

When the divine statement proceeds in the words, “I have given him for a witness,” “him” can hardly refer to any party but David, the party just before mentioned. But how had the race of David been “given for a witness to the peoples”? The race witnessed to peoples in the person of its founder, in the sweet Psalmist of Israel. His psalms bear testimony to the wants of the human soul, a testimony to which thousands of souls in countries distant from each other, and in all ages since the writing, have been responsive, and from which these souls have taken example and imbibed consolation. What writings are so true to nature? What words so genuine an expression of contri-

tion, of thankfulness, and of homage to God as the Psalms of David? If Daniel was “of the king’s seed,” * the race bore witness in the writings of this prophet. Daniel lived in an age when king after king had so conducted himself as to incur for the “seed” the forfeiture provided for in the declaration, “If it commit iniquity, I will chastise it with the rod of men, even with the stripes of the children of men.” Babylonian men, agents unwittingly acting for God, had applied the rod and inflicted the stripes. They had deprived David’s descendants of succession to their ancestor. The monarchy was in abeyance. The inheritance potentially existed, but did not rest because a proper owner did not appear. Daniel testified to the inheritance as awaiting its proper owner in the person of a “Son of Man,” † who should ascend in the clouds of heaven to the ancient of days, and to whom should be given a kingdom, that all peoples, nations and languages should serve Him. Most of all, in a greater than Daniel, in the intended owner of the inheritance, in Him in whom the seed of David culminated, the race testified to peoples concerning God’s rights and man’s duties. It not only testified but invited. In the person of Christ the “seed” gave calls to nations which the race in the

* Dan. i. 3.

† Dan. vii. 13, 14.

time of Isaiah knew not, nations which both at that time and for ages afterwards knew not the race, have run unto it in response to its calls and in fulfilment of the word of Isaiah.

3. For days remote from the time in which Isaiah wrote—"for the latter days"—the prophets expected glorious consequences from the covenant which had been made with David and his seed. Not such were their expectations for the period which was to intervene before the arrival of "the latter days." In the earlier days of the future, the habitation of the Davidic race was to be a mere tabernacle, and this with fissures which needed to be repaired. It was to be a ruin requiring to be built anew in order to be serviceable. This imagery was suggestive of such a condition as that into which the family fell before the birth of Jesus Christ. This imagery as well as its counterpart—the closing of the fissures, the building up of the walls, the restoration of the structure—is exhibited in the last vision of the Book of Amos. In this passage the future of Israel appears under the name of a "day." The day is to bring a destruction to this people, which will be short of total but not far short. Nevertheless this day will not end without bringing blessings, blessings which shall redound from the house of David to whole nations. "The

eyes of God are upon the sinful kingdom, and I will destroy it saving that I will not utterly destroy. . . . In that day will I raise up the tabernacle of David that is fallen, and close up the breaches thereof, and I will raise up his [David's] ruins, and I will build it as in the days of old ; that they [David] may possess the remnant of Edom, and all the nations which [are called by my name, saith the Lord." * In other places the race gets its name, not from the founder of the dynasty, but from the father of this founder ; as if to betoken the fact that the family, before its eventual exaltation, was to return from the royal condition to the condition which had belonged to it before its elevation to royalty.

The reader found in an earlier chapter this destiny for the dynasty implied by language of Micah, in a manner similar, though not altogether the same with that to which we proceed. Jesse the Bethlehemite (the father of David) is a tree which has been disbranched and felled. The stock has been cut down. Only a stump remains. But from the roots of this stump comes a shoot. This sucker (so you may call a shoot from a felled stock) is filled with the Spirit, and so conducts his administration that at length through his influence

* ix. 8-12.

the knowledge of God covers the earth.* “There shall come forth a shoot out of the stock of Jesse, and a branch out of his roots shall bear fruit ; and the Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the Lord ; and his delight shall be in the fear of the Lord, and he shall not judge after the sight of his eyes, neither reprove after the hearing of his ears : but with righteousness shall he judge the poor, and reprove with equity for the meek of the earth : and he shall smite the earth with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips shall he slay the wicked. They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain, for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea.”

If in the utterance last quoted the expectations from the covenant which had been made through the instrumentality of Nathan appear in their climacteric stage, and exhibit an individual descendant of David as introducing an era of blessedness—if the stock of David becomes less conspicuous, and a single scion of the stock becomes the prominent thing—the case is similar in Jeremiah. “Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will perform that

* Isa. xi. 1-4, 9; compare x. 33, 34.

good word which I have spoken concerning the house of Israel. In those days, and at that time, will I cause a branch of righteousness to grow up unto David." * The case is the same in Zechariah, who styles the expected person "The Man whose name is 'The Branch.'"

4. That the covenant and the predictions based thereon had given rise to an expectation that the headship of David's seed would revive—that the beneficent administration of the ancestor would come again in the administration of a scion of the stock of that ancestor—is plain from many parts of the New Testament ; and so much of the expectation as was free from the merely secular quality, was never gainsaid by Jesus Christ.

Did this incomparable person correspond to the ideal depicted by the last words of David, the sweet singer of Israel—One that ruleth over men righteously, comparable in the benign character of his influence to the sunrise of a cloudless morning, a morning when there is clear shining after rain ? Has this descendant of David, in accordance with the covenant, become the head of a kingdom which began with Israelites, extended from Israel to foreign nations and is destined to universality ? There are Christians who joyfully acknowledge the

* xxxiii. 14, 15, vi. 12.

whole of this as true of Christ in his nature as the Son of God, and yet fail to recognize the truth as applicable to the Saviour in his nature as the descendant of David. The New Testament, however, represents "the Son of man"—a title which describes Christ in his assumed nature—as ascending to heaven in the body, with a mouth which at the time was uttering words. And whereas the name Jesus was not applicable to the Saviour independently of his incarnation, the New Testament describes the ascension as having been followed by the promise,* "This same Jesus which is taken up into heaven shall so come even as ye have seen him go into heaven." Years after his ascension St. Paul could write in the present tense, "In him† dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily." "There is one‡ mediator between God and man, the man Christ Jesus." In the nature which He had vouchsafed to assume, and without which He could not die,§ the Father raised Him from the dead and set Him at His own right hand in the heavenly places, and put all things under His feet and gave Him to be head over all things to the church. And He has done this for the whole interval between His first and second comings. When interrogated by Pontius Pilate, "Art thou a king?"

* Acts i. 11. † Col. ii. 9. ‡ 1 Tim. ii. 5. § Eph. i. 20-22.

Christ answered in the affirmative, though a negative answer might have averted his crucifixion. "I am a king."* Because veracity required such an answer, (though he explained, "My kingdom is not of this world,") he added, "To this end have I been born and to this end have I come into the world, that I might bear witness unto the truth."

To be a king one needs to be supreme over all persons and things within one's realm, and needs no more. But to be the King foretold in the Old Testament, the claimant of this kingship must, after dying, live in a body raised from the dead, must sit at the right hand of the Father in Heaven, must minister as a priest while administering as king, and must be capable of extending His earthly kingdom in the midst of obstacles, until it becomes universal. This session, ministry, administration and capacity the New Testament ascribes to the one mediator between God and man, the man Christ Jesus, man while more than man, born of the seed of David, yet declared to be the Son of God by resurrection from the dead.

* John xviii. 37.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE LORD OF DAVID.

PSALM CX.

THE Psalm consists of two addresses. One address is directed by the Universal Father to a person whom the writer calls his lord.

“Jehovah saith unto my lord, Sit thou at my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool. Jehovah shall send forth thy rod of might out of Zion. Rule thou in the midst of thine enemies. Thy people offer themselves willingly in the day of thy power. In beauties of holiness, from the womb of the morning, thou hast the dew of thy youth. Jehovah hath sworn, and will not repent, thou art a priest forever after the description of Melchisedek.”

The other address seems to be responsive. It is directed by the Psalmist to the Universal Father and speaks of, rather than to, the writer's lord.

“The Lord at thy right hand shall crush kings in the day of his wrath. He shall judge among the

nations : He shall fill places with dead bodies. He shall crush the head in many countries. He shall drink of a brook in His way. Therefore shall he lift up his head."

1. Who is meant by the writer's lord? Of the answer to this question, the inquirer cannot judge until he has scanned the traits which the Psalm exhibits as belonging or destined to belong to the lord of the writer. If the Psalm had been written during the life of Saul, Saul might be conceived of as the lord of David, since David was during that time a subject and Saul his king. But the mention of Zion in the sacred ode, as the place whence is to proceed the sway or sceptre of the person at first addressed (not to insist at present upon other facts) proves that the Psalm must be referred to that period of David's life in which he was an independent sovereign, viz.: the period in which the city Zion had come into the hands of the Israelites, and been made the place where the king of Israel held court. Saul cannot be the lord—the master or superior—of David, in the sense of this ode.

The person addressed by the Universal Father is to have a day of power, which implies that he is to have or has had a day of comparative weakness or ineffectiveness. There is to be a day of his wrath. This implies a day of grace which is to follow or

has preceded. He is a person then in the history of whom there are two states or stages. The ornaments of his people and his people themselves are peculiar. The ornaments are not those of soldiers or courtiers—they are sacred—are beauties of holiness. The origin of his people is so described as to import that a new day is about to dawn upon mankind—no doubt the same as just before is called the day of his power, and that the coming daybreak is to bring forth this people as the womb of a mother may give birth to offspring : The youth who come forth from this womb, the people belonging to the person whom the Psalm celebrates, array themselves on his side, are had by him as his own, and for their numbers or refreshing influence are comparable to drops of dew. The person exercises sacerdotal as well as royal functions. He holds “the rod of empire,” a sceptre. This fact marks him as a king. Nevertheless he is declared to be a priest. A priest is, in the language of the Bible, a negotiator who transacts on behalf of another. Except in the few cases where the word imports the notion of such an officer as transacts for people at the side or in front of a human king, it expresses the idea of an officer who intervenes on behalf of his fellow-men before God, by making expiation. When the priestly function is ascribed to a monarch not

subject to another monarch, it can be understood of nothing but the practice of the negotiator who intervenes before God by sacrifice. Such a king, a king uniting in himself both the sacerdotal quality and the regal, had been nondescript in the biblical history, except in the case of a monarch who had reigned at a place called Salem, centuries before the time of David, a monarch named Melchisedek. Nevertheless the lord of David is in our Psalm declared to be a priest and the ancient Melchisedek is brought into view as a precedent or type. The brief notice of Melchisedek in the book of Genesis* embodies the ideal in accordance with which the Psalm contemplates the priest king addressed. The priesthood of the person is perpetual, and the assurance of perpetual priesthood to the king, as if implying a gift hardly to be expected by those for whom the priesthood is to be exercised, as if implying a promise too good to be easily believed—is ushered in by a double guarantee, by an oath and by an appeal to the Divine unchangeableness: “Jehovah hath sworn and will not repent. Thou art a priest forever, after the description of Melchisedek.” If the place of the sceptre which David swayed was Zion of the earthly Jerusalem, this sceptre or the sway which it betokened was in the

* Gen. xiv. 13-20.

hand of the person celebrated to go therefrom in such manner as to reach the hands of his adversaries. However the case may be in the earlier career of the lord of David, this career is not to end before he has reduced all powers adverse to his rule. He is to inflict a widespread massacre, to break the power of potentates, to crush the head in many countries, and so doing to become ruler among his enemies. That the priest king will not fail nor be discouraged ; that successes will make his head erect in cases wherein it might be expected to droop ; that a reviving influence is to be imbibed by him while his conflict with his enemies is in course, may be the thing intended by the prophecy, " He shall drink of a brook in his way : Therefore he shall lift up his head." Such are the traits which mark the quality, —such the lineaments which constitute the portrait —of the person of whom the 110th Psalm makes mention.

2. The question arises, Did these traits belong to any person who lived in Old Testament times ? There are those who answer this question by the allegation that the person meant was David himself, and that if he was the writer of the Psalm, he wrote it that it might be sung by the congregation in homage to the writer : the lord addressed by Jehovah was simply the sovereign of the Israelitish

territory. The sanctuary was in one part of the hill Zion, David's house was in another part of the same hill, and therefore David could be spoken of as called to sit at the right hand of God. This is much to assume. It seems like saying that a man who resides in the neighborhood of a church, sits at the right hand of God. Moreover the hill of Zion (so called) was considerable in extent. It was largely occupied by houses. Its palaces* were to Israel a matter of exultation. The many occupants of these palaces might, for the reason assumed, be equally with David, represented as persons invited to sit at the right hand of God. Moreover, as we have seen, the person divinely addressed is declared to be a priest, and David, notwithstanding the much to the contrary which has of late been said, never appears in the Scriptures as possessed of the priestly quality. Under the constitution of things which obtained in his time, if the biblical accounts which have come down to us are in any wise trustworthy, the regal and the sacerdotal offices could no more meet in one individual than under the American Constitution the executive and the judicial functions can thus meet. Does it follow from such considerations that the sacred ode with which we have to do involves by implication the exchange of the

* Ps. xlviii. 3, 13.

Mosaic economy for a system in some respects different? Nothing short of this is involved. Nothing less than the inauguration of a new order of things is implied by the positive oath and the negative declaration which succeeds the oath—by the two-fold utterance, the Lord hath sworn and will not repent. Either the assurance thus introduced is pregnant with meaning, or the introduction deserves the sarcasm, “*Parturiunt montes, nascetur ridiculus mus.*” A member of the Davidic dynasty could not be a priest without a change of dispensation. A change of dispensation is a thing of which the authors of the theory here rejected will not admit as within the contemplation of psalmists. It follows that even if David could be represented as sitting at the right hand of God for the reason that his house was in the neighborhood of the sanctuary, David could not be the person meant in this Psalm. The person celebrated was in David’s time ideal. The thought was either a play of fancy or it was a vision vouchsafed to the writer by his Inspirer.

If the portrait involved in the ode contains lineaments inconsistent with the Mosaic economy—if the portrait involves the prophecy that a priest non-descript in the law and of a quality inconsistent with the law, was to arise—if involving this, the portrait involves a superseding of the covenant made

at Sinai—nothing stranger was thus implied than was afterwards expressly said in Jeremiah : * “ Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah, not according to the covenant I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt, which my covenant they brake, although I was an husband unto them, saith the Lord.” By those critics who can think that the 110th Psalm was to be sung in homage to David within the courts of the sanctuary the objection is made that the ideas we have attributed to the ode lie outside of the range of Old Testament thought. The truth is that the lord of David is a conception which in different aspects appears again and again in the Hebrew Scriptures, and those Christian scholars who concede the contrary, surrender more than could have been captured. As the change of covenants appears in Jeremiah, so the priest king appears in Zechariah.† By this prophet, the unique scion of the stock of David—“ the man whose name is the branch ”—is exhibited as wearing two crowns and as giving forth from the two capacities denoted by these crowns, the sacerdotal and the kingly, “ the council of peace.” The day of power appears in

* Jer. xxxi. 31, 32.

† Zech. vi. 11-13.

Isaiah,* the day of wrath in the second Psalm,† the universal rule in Daniel.‡

3. To turn from the Old Testament to the New. That Jesus Christ recognized David speaking in the Spirit, as the author of this sacred ode, and recognized the lord therein described as being the Messiah, plainly appears from the question the Saviour addressed to the Pharisees,§ “What think ye of the Christ? Whose son is He?” They answered, “The son of David.” The rejoinder was, “How then doth David in the spirit call Him lord, saying, “The Lord saith unto my lord, sit thou on my right hand till I put thine enemies underneath thy feet: If David calleth Him lord, how is He his son?” Such a question from the lips of Him who commonly denominated Himself the Son of man could have but one meaning. It could not disclaim a human ancestry for the Christ. It imports a claim to *transcend* David, as a lord transcends a vassal, and it alleged the Psalm in proof of the claim.

With regard to the “day of power.” The earthly ministry of our Saviour was a day of comparative ineffectiveness. Those who subjected themselves to His rule were comparatively few and were far from having decided and persistent confidence. Nicode-

* Isa. liii. 11, 12.

† Ps. ii. 12.

‡ Dan. vii. 13, 14.

§ Matt. xxii. 42-45.

mus could come to Him for enlightenment, but only at night : Joseph of Arimathea was a disciple, yet secretly, for fear of the Jews. Some of Christ's followers on occasions could withdraw, and walk no more with Him. When our Lord's person was seized all the disciples forsook Him and fled. But a new day dawned. Exalted to the Father's throne, the ascended Christ shed forth that inspiration which at the following Pentecost men in Judæa saw and heard in its effects. Christ's people offered themselves willingly ; with prejudices uprooted as by a mighty rushing wind, with an enlightenment and a glow significantly figured by the tongue-like flame which sat upon each of the apostles. Beauties of holiness, sacred ornaments, miraculous powers, weapons of warfare mighty through God to the pulling down of strongholds, qualified them for the work they were to perform. To the Messiah's cause they were as dew is to the earth, so reviving, so fertilizing, so productive of fruit.

With allusion to our Psalm, the New Testament argues, " If, after the likeness of Melchisedek, there ariseth another priest, who hath been made, not after the law of a carnal commandment, but after the power of an endless life, there is a disannulling of a foregoing commandment because of its weakness and unprofitableness (for the law made nothing

perfect), and a bringing in thereupon of a better hope, through which we draw nigh unto God.”*

Other parts of the vision revealed in the 110th Psalm, the parts concerning the day of the wrath of the lord of David, the parts which imply opposition to the Christ as offered by earthly potentates, and tell of the crushing of these powers by Him who is head over all things to His church, are exhibited by the New Testament as biding their time, as awaiting their fulfilment. Time yet future is to hear the cry of kings of the earth to mountains and rocks, “Fall on us and hide us from the wrath of the Lamb.” Gog and Magog are to be crushed. A man of sin, a son of perdition, is to oppose himself against all that is called God or is worshipped, and him the Lord Jesus is to slay by the breath of his mouth. The cry of kings, the crushing of Gog and Magog, the slaying by the breath of the mouth—these, alas, will interpret “the day of His wrath.”

* Heb. vi. 15, 16, 18, 19.

CHAPTER IX.

SUFFERINGS AND EXPECTATIONS.

PSALM XXII.

SEVERAL questions propound themselves to a thoughtful reader of this Psalm. Not the least of these are the inquiries, what is the “eating” attributed first to the meat and afterwards to the fat, an eating which connects itself with a turning to the Lord on the part of all the ends of the earth? What is the significance of adding to the prediction “all they that go down to the dust shall bow before Him,” another, a subsequent prediction, viz., “a seed shall serve Him”? The former prediction may seem to include the latter, and render it superfluous.

Consider the contents of the sacred ode. Inquire what was its origin. Afterwards compare the Psalm with the Gospels.

The person who speaks is at the time of speaking without countenance from on high. Nothing in the

circumstances which surround him goes to show that God is with him. Though he prays, he has to drink the cup of misery which has come to his lips. This state of things co-exists with holiness on the part of the God who has promised to answer prayer; but it is not apparent how these co-existing things are consistent with each other. The lot of this member of the race of Israel contrasts with the lot of his ancestors. They trusted in God and were not put to shame, but he is despised and trodden upon. In his case, while trouble is near help is distant. How is this to be reconciled to the fact that God has not only been, but has been felt to be his dependence throughout his life, from his very birth?

The Sufferer is surrounded by persecutors. They are one while called a sword, another while are denominated hounds, bulls, lions. Nevertheless they are human beings, as is plain from their being denominated an assembly of evil doers. In their brutality they cast lots before the eyes of the sufferer in order to determine to which of their number this or that part of his raiment shall belong. They shake their heads in derision. They laugh him to scorn. They say, "Commit thyself to the Lord. Let God deliver him, seeing he delighteth in him." Meanwhile every bone of the sufferer makes its severalty to be felt—as it were, asks attention to its own

ache. The juices of his body are dried up. His tongue cleaves to the roof of his mouth. His flesh is about to return to the dust of which he was made.

Abruptly the sufferer becomes jubilant. His sufferings cease to be mentioned. His utterances become thanksgivings. The plaintive exclamation, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me!" is exchanged for the grateful acknowledgment, "He hath not despised nor abhorred the affliction of the afflicted man, neither hath he hid his face from him, but when he crieth unto him he heard." The speaker will declare how God is describable, viz., as a being who in the event forsakes not, but hears and heeds. The speaker will direct the declaration unto his brethren of the race of Isarel. Amid a congregated people he will utter and invoke praises to the God whose servant he is. He had made vows and these he will perform. The vows had involved the giving of a feast, as is plain from the subsequent mention, made more than once, concerning persons who eat. Can the feast be the same as that which was afterwards predicted by Isaiah,* the feast accompanied or followed by the removal of the veil which obstructs the sight of the peoples of the earth, the feast accompanied or followed by the swallowing

* Isa. xxv. 6-8.

up of death? With regard to the acceptance of the feast, the speaker is not confident that the acceptance will from the first be universal. It is from the meek, from them that already seek the Lord, from the class whom he apostrophizes in the words "Let your heart live forever," that his expectations are highest. Nevertheless, soon or late, all they that be fat upon earth (by "the fat" does the speaker mean the fastidious?) will eat and worship. Universal conversion will come at last. All they that go down to the dust will bow before the Lord. So soon as the speaker had been able to praise his God because this being had not despised or abhorred the affliction of the afflicted man—had not hidden his face from the sufferer, but had heard him when he cried—it had appeared that the forsaking plaintively inquired about in the first exclamation of the sufferer had been but temporary at the most. The answer to the "why" of the inquiry "why hast thou forsaken me?" appeared at this later stage of the development. The motive of the temporary forsaking which the speaker had suffered had been to bring about a turning of all the ends of the earth to the worship of the one true God.

The closing words of the Psalm are, "A seed shall serve him. It shall be counted unto the

Lord for the generation. They shall come and shall declare His righteousness unto a people that shall be born, that He hath done "the righteousness. Such is for the most part the translation given in the authorized version. The principal difference is that the English Bible gives "a generation," where the Hebrew reads "the generation."

The question comes up, what is meant by "the generation"? In the Bible this phrase is not always used of a class of men distinguished from other classes by its time of living. It sometimes distinguishes a class from other classes by its moral qualities. Thus we hear of the generation of the righteous,* the generation of them that seek Him, † the generation of thy children, ‡ the generation of the upright.§ If such is the use of the word in the passage with which we have to do, the prediction is to the effect that a seed or race rendering services to God will be reckoned to Him as a class peculiarly His own; that this seed will appear sooner or later, and will declare to people not born at the time of the writing of the Psalm the thing which the sufferer declares in person, viz., the righteousness God had shown to him who at first had seemed to be forsaken to the will of his enemies. The utterance intimates that a seed or class des-

* Ps. xiv. 5.

† xxiv. 6.

‡ lxxiii. 15.

§ cxii. 2.

tined to be credited to Jehovah as peculiarly the divine property, the seed or class elsewhere named "the generation of the righteous," will become to posterity declarers of the faithfulness the Universal Father had shown to the sufferer, and, so declaring, will pave the way to the universal conversion. Thus understood, the closing sentences respecting service to be rendered to the Lord by "a seed," make an addition to the meaning of the prediction previously made, to the promise that the whole of mankind should become His worshippers. The sentences tell of the means or instrumentality whereby the tidings concerning the sufferer would reach people of a future period. The conclusion is not superfluous or tautological. It differs from predictions before made within the ode in this, that it provides for the publication of the righteous vindication of the sufferer, its publication to people of a future time. The "seed" may be the "holy seed" which another prophet * compares to the substance of a tree, a perennial substance remaining to a trunk or stock when from year to year in the autumn the tree loses its leaves. The seed meant is no doubt the godlier part of Israel.

2. Whence came the very peculiar ideas which this twenty-second Psalm imports? If no meaning

* Isa. vi. 13.

ought to be imputed to the words but such as can be got out of them, and if all the meaning which resides in the words ought to be acknowledged, interpreters are bound to admit that the sufferings the Psalm tells of, and especially the high expectations it represents as destined to be realized from these sufferings, were beyond the range of things which David could mean to ascribe to himself, and therefore that the writer of the ode and the person who speaks therein ought not to be assumed to be the same. The sufferings and expectations told of might be those belonging to the race of Israel. But it cannot be the race that speaks, because the race appears in the ode as that which is to be spoken to. They to whom the speaker is to declare the name or quality of his deliverer are described as the speaker's brethren, "them of the seed of Israel." Moreover there is nothing within the Psalm which goes to show that the speaker was in the time of the writer either existent or historical. He may at that time have been an ideal person, the case being similar to that with which we meet in another Psalm. If the last words of the sweet singer of Israel, "The Spirit of the Lord spake by me, and his words were on my lips," were uttered with truth, the writing before us may draw a portrait not identifiable at the time of writing, even by the

writer of the Psalm. The portrait may have been made for suspension in the Old Testament gallery with view to the benefit of a subsequent age. Concerning a thing mentioned in another Psalm,* the writer expressly says, "This shall be written for the generation to come." Moreover, the person intended by the Inspirer of David might prove to be a king, a priest, or more than either, without being exhibited in every vision vouchsafed to this Psalmist, with such robes or titles as would bespeak kingly, priestly, or superhuman qualities.

My father may have told me of a brother of his whom he had not seen for years and I had never seen. I am now grown to manhood. A stranger appears at the homestead and declares himself to be my father's brother. Does his appearance correspond with one and another of the portraits hanging in the old house, one exhibiting my uncle as a boy, another exhibiting him as he was when grown to adolescence? Are there scars on the face of the stranger and the like in the portraits? These facts will have a weight in determining the stranger's claim to identity, and if accompanied by other proofs may be conclusive. The question who sat for a portrait may be indeterminable until the man presents himself in person, and in that event may

* cii. 18.

become altogether determinable. Such a passage from the quality of a thing latent and inexplicable to the quality of a thing manifest and capable of being made cognizable by the heathen is attributed to the meaning of the Old Testament, when the preaching of Jesus Christ is described as the revelation of a mystery,* “a mystery kept in silence through times eternal, but now manifested and by the Scriptures of the Prophets made known unto all the nations.”

3. To pass from the prophetical to the historical. The New Testament history exhibits Jesus of Nazareth and the sufferer who describes himself in the twenty-second Psalm as answering the one to the other, in the manner of type and antitype. In the account given by the gospels Christ appears as the Son of man not less than as the Son of God. When his death approaches He shudders, and for a little time prays that it may be averted: “Father, if it be possible let this cup pass from me. Now is my soul troubled. And what shall I say? Father, save me from this hour. But for this cause came I unto this hour.” The Saviour is exhibited as “delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God,” “delivered into the hands of men,” “delivered for our offences,” and, by conse-

* Rom. xvi. 25, 26.

quence as being forsaken to the power of his enemies by the Universal Father, "forsaken," though "not despised nor abhorred."

A coincidence is sometimes so extraordinary that it is difficult to believe it to be accidental. A case of this kind occurred when fifty years ago two ex-presidents of the United States, both of whom had been signers of the Declaration of Independence, died on the same day, and that day the anniversary of the signing. The coincidence between the conduct attributed in our Psalm to the assembly of evil doers and the conduct pursued by the soldiers who attended the crucifixion appeared to the Evangelist John to be of this extraordinary description. He writes, "The soldiers, when they had crucified Jesus, took His garments and made four parts, to every soldier a part, and also the coat. Now the coat was without seam, woven from the top throughout. They said therefore one to another, Let us not rend it, but cast lots for it, whose it shall be." As if the realization of the idea of the twenty-second Psalm might be conceived of as the motive which prompted the soldiers, the evangelist adds to his statement significantly,* "that the Scripture might be fulfilled." In like manner another evangelist writes that persons near the place of cruci-

* John xix. 23, 24.

fixion, brutally, as if willing to identify themselves with the "assembly of evil doers," the lions, bulls, and dogs of the Psalm, or as impelled by an impulse of which they were unconscious, derided the pretensions of the sufferer in words, a part of which they unwittingly took from our Psalm: "They wagged their heads and said, He trusted in God that he would deliver him. Let him deliver him if he will have him, for he said, I am the Son of God." "Jesus cried with a loud voice, Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani—My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?"

For what did He make this exclamation, except for the sake of them who stood by, that they might ponder the "Why," and compare it with the consequences which the sufferer in the Psalm expected to come from the temporary forsaking of which he spoke. If the reason of the exclamation was different, for what cause was the cry made in the same Hebrew words with which the Psalm begins? Christ did the thing in order to identify Himself with the sufferer the Psalm exhibits.

With regard to the discontinuance of the forsaking, the not despising nor abhorring the affliction of the afflicted man, and the large expectations of the sufferer—after Christ's death the disciples, disheartened, slow to understand the "Why" of the

forsaking, say one to another, "We hoped that it was He who should redeem Israel," as if this hope had perished or well nigh perished with the crucifixion. But on the third day Christ is raised from the dead, and the rising is ascribed to the power of the Father, the power of Him who at the cross had seemed to desert the claims of Jesus of Nazareth. On the day of the rise He appears among His people. They are troubled, because they think that what they behold is a spectre. To displace their trouble He shows His disciples His bodily hands, which had been perforated by nails, His fleshly side, which had been pierced by a spear. He says, "Handle me, for a spirit hath not flesh and blood as ye see me have." He had said, "I am the living bread which came down from heaven. The bread which I will give is my flesh for the life of the world." He had at a later time exchanged this figure of speech for a figure of action. In the evening which preceded His death He took bread, blessed, brake it, and said, "This is my body." Of the bread which had thus been given, first in promise, afterwards in symbol, and on the cross in more than either promise or symbol, the three thousand of the day of Pentecost, a number which soon became five thousand, and not long after many ten thousands, all within the single city Jerusalem, ate and were satisfied.

They accepted Christ crucified for the strengthening and refreshing of their souls, as bodies are refreshed and strengthened by bread and wine.

With regard to "a seed," which was to serve the Lord and to be reckoned to Him as His generation, the seed which was to come, and to people not born in the times of the sufferer was to become the declarers of the righteous vindication wrought by the Universal Father for His misconstrued representative ; it hardly needs to be said that this seed or class appeared in such of Israel as accepted the Messiah ; in apostles and evangelists, in pastors and teachers, who each serving in his appointed time have brought the gospel of the life, death and resurrection of the sufferer to us, the people of the present century.

The twenty-second Psalm was a lock of unusual wards. For a thousand years it served as a safeguard for the truth it was intended to secure. In due time the key appeared in the history of Jesus Christ. The inference that the lock and the key had had the same origin and had been intended the one for the other, from that time forward spoke for itself.

CHAPTER X.

THE SERVANT OF THE LORD.

ISAIAH XXXIX.—LXVI.

ISAIAH lived in the reign of Hezekiah, King of Judah, some seven centuries before the Christian era. So much appears from the historical passage in the middle of the prophet's book. Most of the remainder of the work answers entirely to the description with the mention of which the work begins, "The VISION of Isaiah." The business of the book lies with things invisible to the outward eye at the time of the writing. Even the historical passage, chapters xxxvi.—xxxix., inclusive, contains visional parts. It contains prophecies within itself, prophecies concerning events which were to take place in time near to the time of the utterance of the prophecies. These events, predicted within the limits of the historical passage, were to have the effect of guaranteeing for the contemporaries of the writer the truth of his visions concerning times comparatively

distant, and so, of enabling the prophet to say, "The former things are come to pass, and new things do I declare. Before they spring forth I tell you of them." The new things thus spoken of, things merely germinant in the age of the speaker, relate largely to a "Servant of the LORD." A person thus named appears many times in the third of the principal portions of the book.

1. Who is this "Servant of the Lord?" Often it is Israel, the Israelitish people, that is denominated the servant of Jehovah: * "Ye are my witnesses, saith the LORD, and are My Servant whom I have chosen." Israel is spoken of as the Lord's messenger, as elect to the functions of witnessing and serving, in the persons of its ancestors, Abraham and Jacob, and as performing such functions for the benefit of others, even when the functions profit not the functionary. Being thus doers of the work of the Lord, they are entitled to be called "the Lord's servant." They subserve the Lord's cause. But Israel is blind; none are more deaf than he. If he sees he does not observe; if he opens the eyes of others, he does not open his own eyes.† "Hear, ye deaf, and look, ye blind, that ye may see. Who is blind, but My Servant, or deaf as my messenger that I send?" Because the deafness and blindness

* xliii. 10.

† xlii. 18-21.

of Israelites are guilty, and because of the trust which is deposited with them, are guiltier than they would be otherwise, God will magnify the law and make it be honored by judgments on this people. He will accomplish His ulterior purpose, the making Himself the object of universal worship among men, by taking others to assume their place : * “ Ye shall leave your name for a curse unto my chosen ; for the Lord God shall slay thee and call His servants by another name, so that he who blesseth himself on the earth shall bless himself in the God of truth, and he that sweareth on the earth shall swear by the God of truth.”

The servant of the Lord is sometimes a people distinguishable from Israel considered in the bulk, distinguishable as the kernel of a nut is from the shell, as the invisible church is from the visible. Within the nation there is a select part. This select part is chosen in a higher sense than the race at large and is not to be cast away. Their seed and name are to remain. They are compared to the valuable juice contained in grapes, for the sake of which the cluster is to be kept from utter destruction. “ As the fruit is found within the cluster, and one saith, Destroy not the cluster, for a blessing is in it ; so will I do for My Servants’ sakes, that I

* lxv. 15.

destroy not all." This part of the people is to be joined by persons foreign to the Israelitish race. God, which gathereth the outcasts of Israel, saith, yet will I gather others to him, beside his own that *are* gathered." These members of Israel, elect from a body itself elect, are to scatter all hindrances, mountainous as the obstacles in their path may be, and to vindicate their quality as the servant of the Lord, by effecting His purposes, not only with sincerity, but with eventual success.* "Thou shalt thresh mountains and beat them small, and shalt make the hills as chaff. Thou shalt fan them, and the wind shall scatter them, and thou shalt rejoice in the Lord, thou shalt glory in the Holy One of Israel."

Occasionally the title "Servant of the Lord" is applied to a party hardly the same with either the bulk or the select portion of Israel. Remarkable are the utterances which appear in a speech addressed to heathen nations. A speaker who represents himself as addressed by God under the title "My Servant," and as addressed also under the name "Israel"—this speaker strangely represents himself likewise as having had for his vocation the function of recovering Israel, of bringing Israel back to his God. An Israel is to be the restorer of Israel. The

* xli. 15, 16.

speaker invites distant peoples to listen to him. His penetrating speech was comparable to a sword or arrow, though in his earlier life the sword had been in a scabbard, the arrow had been hidden in a quiver. The speech, penetrating as it was, had, after becoming public, not reached the heart of the bulk of Israel or recovered this straying people. He complains that he had labored in vain. The complaint is answered by the reassuring declaration that a far higher vocation has been assigned to him in the counsels of the Universal Father, the vocation of recovering to duty, to God, and to well being the benighted among mankind at large.* “It is too light a thing that thou shouldst be my Servant to raise the tribes of Jacob. I will give thee for a light to the Gentiles, that thou mayst be my salvation unto the end of the earth.” Thus saith the Lord to him whom man despiseth, to him whom the nation abhorreth : Kings shall see and arise ; princes, and they shall worship. Who can this speaker be—this Israel who was to recover Israel ? Is he a plurality or a single individual ? In places in which Israel is a people, a plurality, the fact discovers itself by the intermixture of plural with singular forms of speech ; for example, in the address,† “Ye are my witnesses and my Servant whom I have chosen.” “Ye” in this passage

* xlix. 1-9.

† Isaiah xliii. 10.

stands in a place where "Thou" might be expected, and "witnesses" appears in the diction where "witness" could not but be the phrase, if an individual were meant. There is nothing of this sort in the utterances with which we are now concerned. The parties to be restored appear as races, but the restorer exhibits himself in the aspect of a person simply and solely. Consider the title of honor which had been solemnly given to an ancestor of the chosen people. Reflect that Israel had been the name of the progenitor before it became the name of his progeny. The title had been given to the ancestor in token of the fact that he had wrestled with God and wrestled prevailingly. The progenitor had received for himself and his progeny the promise that he and they should be the channel of benediction to the races of mankind, and thereby of glorification to God—the promise † "In thee and thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed." If this promise was to reach its highest realization in a single member of the progeny, and this person was to be an intercessor, what wonder that this incomparable individual should appear, in the ideal exhibited to the mind of Isaiah, as addressed in the words, "Thou art My Servant Israel, in whom I shall be glorified?" If the restorer of

* Gen. xxviii, 14 ; xxxii. 24-28.

mankind could with allusion to the ruiner of the human race be denominated, in New Testament phrase, the second Adam, what the wonder if, with allusion to an antecedent promise, a second Israel appears in an Old Testament vision as embodying the conception of such a restorer? Something mystical, something in the nature of a germ requiring development, lies in the fact that both the party to be restored and the party restoring appear under the name of Israel. The same mystical diction appears in passages written after the death of David, in which a future member of the dynasty founded by the son of Jesse bears this monarch's name. "Afterward shall the children of Israel return and seek the Lord their God, and David their king . . . in the latter days." * "I will set up one shepherd over them . . . even my servant David." † David is plainly the name of both the nadir and the zenith of that dynasty which the prophets conceive of. Is not the name Israel used analogously?

It is with traits which suit a person rather than a people, that "the Servant of the Lord" appears in another representation made by our prophet, ‡ a representation which must be meant of a time intermediate between the failure in the land of Israel and the success in lands of the Gentiles. In this passage

* Hosea iii. 5.

† Ezek. xxxiv. 23.

‡ xlii. 1-8.

judgment—judgment in the earth, judgment to truth, judgment to the Gentiles—is the prominent thing the servant is to bring about. But the connection is such that the judgment meant can hardly be anything but one of redress to the Gentiles and to the truth on the one hand, and a judgment consisting in retribution to graven images on the other hand. The judgment proceeds from a judge who is such in character that he breaks not the bruised reed nor quenches the smoking flax, and the outcome of the judgment is that the isles await his law. Discouragements may meet him, but he will neither give up nor despond until he has succeeded in the work of redressing the wrongs men and the truth have suffered from idolatry. Whatever the opposition he may encounter, he will not be loud or boisterous ; he will pursue his end without tumult or outcry. Noiselessly, and without either failure or discouragement he will prosecute the duty assigned him in the counsels of the Universal Father.

In a similar manner, with qualities which belong to an individual rather than a people, the subject of discourse appears in another of Isaiah's visions. I mean the remarkable vision* of eventual exaltation and antecedent suffering, the " report " of which has for ages attracted so much attention and touched

* lii. 13—liii. 12.

so many hearts. Here the subject of the prophet's utterances is called by the Lord "My righteous Servant," though the contrary of righteousness is elsewhere in Isaiah the thing attributed to Israel as a nation. He is denominated "a man of sorrows," and there is nothing to indicate that this "man" is in any sense a plurality: He has a susceptibility of being cut off out of the land of the living, and is consigned to a grave—a susceptibility and consigning often and emphatically declared to be things from which the select portion, if not the whole, of Israel must as a race be always exempt. The "seed" must accomplish its mission before it can expire. The tree* may from time to time cast its leaves, but the trunk will keep its substance. Think of the utterance:† "If heaven above can be measured and the foundations of the earth searched out beneath, I will also

* Isa. vi. 13.

† Jer. xxxi., 37 The disruption into chapters began more than a thousand years after Old Testament times, and is not recognized in the synagogue lessons. It often mars the connection. Chapter lii. 13-15 in Isaiah reports for the servant an eventual influence upon whole nations, which influence shall contrast with the earlier effect of his appearance. Chapter liii. 1-9 proceeds to tell more fully of this appearance, and of its effects, viz.: of disesteem, misconstruction, suffering and death. These come to the Servant, seem to belie the report and cause disbelief. Chapter liii. 10-12 iterates the report, and declares that the suffering and death will be not only an antecedent to the exaltation, but its cause.

cast off all the seed of Israel for all that they have done, saith the Lord."

The Servant reaches the highest elevation in the minds of men. He is extolled, nations and their kings acknowledge him, but acknowledgment is not rendered him immediately. He does not reach such results except by the road of ignominy and suffering. In the earlier stages of his career he is like a root rising from dry ground, a thing not sightly. Men avert their eyes from him. He is despised and rejected. Far from regarding the griefs and sorrows which are upon him, as caused by the sins of others, mortals regard these sufferings as an infliction deserved by himself. Under oppression, when on his way to be slaughtered, the Servant of the Lord (as in the scene we lately contemplated) abstains from loudness in the streets. He opens not his mouth ; he dies ; his body is interred in a grave ; his soul has become an offering for sin. And it is after he has thus suffered that the pleasure of the " Lord prospers in his hands. It is because he had entered into the lot deserved by transgressors and had poured out his soul unto death that he enters into the category of the victorious, becomes a conqueror, has the great of the earth allotted to him as captives, apports among his people the avails of his victories and

attains to homage far and wide in the regions of the world.

2. To draw to a close. The notion of the Servant of the Lord, variously as it is exhibited by Isaiah, is resolvable into one idea having different phases or stages of development. Moreover, all of these stages have in history been brought to realizations, either consummated or incipient. Israel in the mass answered and now answers to the characterization expressed in the remarkable address, "Ye are my witnesses." The race testifies to the books of the Old Testament, and the invaluable contents of those books. The race has been and is a "messenger" to the nations, opening the ears of people foreign to it, yet a messenger not hearkening to the tidings which it carries, the keeper of prophecy, the living fulfilment thereof, yet having a veil upon its own eyes.

When the "Servant of the Lord" describes the better part of the race, the select of Israel, the conception has its counterpart in Psalmists and Prophets of the Old Testament. Especially it has its counterpart in the twelve, the seventy, and the one hundred and twenty of whom the New Testament makes mention. These and other Jews like-minded answer the description given when Isaiah tells of an Israel not cast away and joined by sons of the stranger. They were a nucleus to which people

gathered until the nucleus reached the dimensions of the present Christendom.

Does the vision concerning the "Servant of the Lord" take a further development? Does the pyramid reach its apex in an individual? The prophecy came to its verification in Jesus, the person thus named before He was conceived in the womb. During the first thirty years of His earthly life the Founder of Christianity had been as a sword within a scabbard, as an arrow within a quiver. He had been but little known. Subsequently He announced Himself, with speech how penetrating! Nevertheless, when near the end of His public ministry He could speak of the comparative fewness of the Israelites whom He had gathered for the Father in the lamenting words, "Jerusalem, Jerusalem!* Thou that killest the prophets and stonest them that are sent unto thee! How often would I have gathered thy children as a hen gathereth her brood under her wings; and ye would not." Penetrating as was His word, Christ rarely used loud speech; He avoided publicity in cases where publicity and loudness were not indispensable for the prosecution of His work. In a synagogue on a Sabbath, the Saviour had by word of mouth caused a withered hand to become as healthy as the other hand of a sufferer present.

* Matt. xxiii. 37.

This use of the sacred day roused the wrath of zealots belonging to the congregation. The Pharisees took counsel against Him that they might destroy Him. Knowing the fact He withdrew from the neighborhood. Great multitudes followed Him. He healed them all, as He had healed the man in the synagogue. These multitudes consisted, to a large extent, of persons who expected to find in the Messiah a secular deliverer. They were people of the same sort as on another occasion proposed to take Jesus by force and make Him king.* A war cry on his part would have been enough to bring about a rising on the part of the multitudes. He not only continued to be away from the disturbed neighborhood, but charged the multitudes that they should not make Him known ; in order, says the historian, St. Matthew,† that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Isaiah the prophet, saying : “ Behold ! my servant whom I have chosen, my beloved in whom my soul is well pleased. I will put my spirit upon Him and He shall declare judgment to the Gentiles. He shall not strive nor cry aloud, neither shall any one hear His voice in the streets. A bruised reed shall He not break and smoking flax shall He not quench, till He send forth judgment unto victory, and in His name shall the Gentiles hope.”

* John vi. 15.

† Matt. xii. 18-21.

Christ's original disciples in the time of His tribulation were staves which gave way under the weight laid upon them ; they were lamps, the wick of which smoked or failed. The Saviour did not throw away these reeds, did not extinguish these smoking wicks. When the Lord's person was seized in the garden of Gethsemane, all the disciples forsook Him and fled. He had mercy. He so bound up or bandaged these broken reeds as to make them worthy dependences to His cause. He refilled and relighted these smoking lamps. He did not repudiate the disciple who had thrice denied Him.

With regard to the vision which exhibits the Servant of the Lord as expiring by and for men, dying by their hands and for their benefit—the representation speaks for itself. By language which our Saviour used at different times during His life, He put Himself under the necessity of verifying the prophecy in His own person, uninviting to human instincts as this verification was. The hypothesis of modern Jews (a hypothesis not more contrary to the applications of the passage made in the New Testament than inconsistent with the meaning ascribed to the place by the traditions of this remarkable people. *) is to the effect that the Servant is the Israelitish race ; some say the whole race, others say the race

* Hengstenberg's "Christology," Edinburgh Ed. Vol. II. pp., 310-313.

in its select part. This theory might reach a realization if the race should in both the one and the other of these pluralities pour out its soul unto death in expiation for human sin ; but what in that case would befall the Old Testament doctrine,* that this people shall not cease to be of the races of mankind until the sun and moon shall depart from the heavens ?

Jews ask the questions “ At what time did Jesus of Nazareth conquer in a battle ? when did He receive captives taken in war, as His apportionment ? when did He allot to His soldiery the spoil taken from a conquered enemy ? But the questions make no difficulty for the Christian. The reason given for the victory and for its results, viz., the fact that the Servant had poured out His soul unto death, had been numbered with the transgressors and had thus borne the sin of many, makes it plain that neither the contest nor the victory nor the captured spoil belongs to the secular sphere. Isaiah’s visions concerning the Servant of the Lord have hitherto escaped frustration, although frustration was at the time when they were uttered, and for ages afterwards continued to be the fate likely in human probability to become their lot. The Messiah is extolled far and wide, already. He now besprinkles

* Jer. xxxi. 35, 56.

nations with an influence which, in proportion to their susceptibility thereto, raises them above other nations and causes their kings, with a devoutness greater or less, to do Him homage. Some of the visions of Isaiah predict that His moral conquests will eventually extend to the "ends of the earth." Christians ! Be confident respecting the future of the nations upon earth. " The Ides of March have come, and have not gone."

CHAPTER XI.

THE OUTPOURING OF THE SPIRIT, THE GREAT DAY
OF THE LORD, AND EVENTS WHICH MUST
PRECEDE THAT DAY.

JOEL II. 28-32.

THERE is to be an unusual effusion of the Holy Spirit ; an outpouring of inspiration which will come upon the young as well as the old, upon servants, male and female, as well as their masters. Further on in time there is to be a day so signal, so surpassing all previous days, so different from days in which the human element seems more prevalent than the divine, that it can be described as the day of the Lord, "the great and terrible day of the LORD." Antecedently to the coming of this unique epoch, bloodshed, war and conflagrations which cause cities to ascend in columns of smoke, and, contemporaneously or subsequently, fearful sights in the heavens are to appear. In the interval which is to elapse before the great and terrible

day, and perhaps before the obscuration of the heavenly bodies, the knowledge of Jehovah the God of Israel will reach the heathen, and among these pagan races will bring about the invocation of His name. Effecting this result the knowledge will work deliverance for the persons enlightened and converted. Whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord (Jehovah) shall be delivered, delivered from the mastery of sin, delivered in the great and terrible day of the Lord. If there is to be this salvation in countries distant from the country where the name of Jehovah had been before known and worshipped, the country of which Jerusalem was the capital, the people by means of whom the name of Jehovah is to be carried to foreign climes must escape extirpation, must continue in the quality of a remnant, if not as a whole, until it has wrought its work as God's messenger to the nations, and this escape from extirpation must include such of the individual inhabitants of Zion and of other parts of Jerusalem as shall be divinely called to the errand.

Moreover, the escape of a remnant when judgment after judgment seemed likely to bring about the extinction of the whole of the race of Israel is so guaranteed by prophecy, and a universal invocation of the name of Jehovah is so guaranteed by the

same authority, that the fulfilment of the one guarantee when witnessed by the ages will assure the hope of the fulfilment of the other. The escape of a remnant in Jerusalem will warrant the expectation that Jerusalem will survive until its people shall reach their destination, viz., the propagation of the name of Jehovah and the deliverance of worshippers of this name.

1. The foregoing statements take the second chapter of the Book of Joel, as that chapter stands in the revised version. The statements are a paraphrase of this version. Several events answering to these statements have already occurred. That outpouring of inspiration which began in the Pentecostal season told of in the Acts of the Apostles; the response to St. Peter's call, "Save yourselves from this crooked generation," a response made by three thousand of the inhabitants of Jerusalem, three thousand which within a short time became five thousand, and afterwards many ten thousands; the fact that these Israelites went everywhere preaching the word of deliverance; the consigning of places far and near, and among these places the city of Jerusalem, to bloodshed and desolation; the recurrence of wars and devastations. from age to age in history—have fulfilled a large part of the prophecy of Joel. If other parts

of the prophecy, the great and terrible day of the Lord, and that turning of the sun into darkness and the moon into blood, which is to precede the coming of the great and terrible day, are in the nineteenth century of the Christian era still future, this fact accords well with utterances of Christ,* which are so similar to Joel's utterances that the similarity can hardly be accidental: "The sun shall be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light . . . and then shall they see the Son of man coming in the clouds with great power and glory."

2. To pass from the verifications which the prophecy of Joel has received or awaits, to other points of interest, let me premise that throughout the prophecy the proper name of the God of Israel, the peculiar name "Jehovah," stands where our translators have placed the appellative phrase "the Lord." In the sentence concerning deliverance, the original runs, "Whosoever shall call upon the name of Jehovah shall be delivered." As the prophets denounce insincere worship, I assume that the "calling" meant in Joel is such an invocation as comes of a practical faith. It is plain from the connection that by the being "delivered," a deliverance in the great and terrible day of the

* Mark xiii. 24-26.

Lord is the thing intended. When Joel proceeds, "In Mount Zion and in Jerusalem there shall be those that escape, as the Lord hath said, and among the remnant" shall be "those whom the Lord shall call," he introduces this statement by the word "for," as though the statement was meant to be understood as confirmatory of the promise just before made. But where are we to find the revelation referred to in the clause "as the Lord hath said," the clause annexed to the utterance "There shall be those that escape." If the escape meant is an escape from the extinction with which the calamities mentioned in other predictions had threatened the race of Israel, the revelation is to be found in Old Testament declarations, some of which make mention of the beneficent result intended for the escape. Take, for example, declarations of Isaiah,* that the cities of Israel were destined to be deprived of inhabitants, and that notwithstanding the desolation of the country and the massacre of its occupants, this people would compare with a tree, the stump of which remains when the trunk has been felled, the tree and the people resembling each other in this: that in circumstances which threaten to be deadly to them, both may survive and be productive of an outcome,

* Isa. vi. 11-13.

the tree of shoots, the people of a godly progeny. Elsewhere* the same prophet, after renewing his predictions of devastation to the cities of Judah, writes, "The remnant that is escaped, of the house of Judah, shall again take root downward and bear fruit upward. For out of Jerusalem shall go forth a remnant, and out of Mount Zion they that shall escape. The zeal of the Lord of hosts shall perform this." "I will send such as escape of them unto the nations . . . that have not heard of my fame, and they shall declare my glory among the nations.† In days to come shall Jacob take root; Israel shall blossom and bud. And they fill the face of the world with fruit."‡ Such utterances serve to show how Joel could speak of the escape of a remnant of Israel as an escape which the Lord had destined. The declarations are plain to the point that the race of Abraham could not become extinct until it had accomplished the end for which it was elect, the blessing of all the families of the earth.

These utterances tend to show, also, how the prophet after the promise, "Whosoever shall call upon the name of Jehovah shall be delivered," could think it necessary to add the declaration that the remnant destined to survive the calamities of

* Isa. xxxvii. 31.

† Isa. lxvi. 19.

‡ xxvii. 6.

the race was to include persons "whom the Lord their God should call." A class of persons not divinely called neither would nor could so blossom and bud as to fill the world with fruit. Joel's promise and the declaration annexed thereto are coherent, if the latter indicates the agency by the instrumentality of which the name of Jehovah was to become known and invocable—known and invocable by the "whosoever" in the interest of whom the utterance going before had been made. Otherwise the discourse is incoherent, and the word "for" in the thirty-second verse is futile.

3. The interdependence of the prophets is a point of interest. No prophet seems to have been independent of other prophets. The Spirit spake by David, yet David sought counsel from Nathan. It was through the writings of Jeremiah that the prophet Daniel came to know that the Lord would accomplish seventy years in the desolations of Jerusalem. In consonance with such facts the prophecy of Joel does not give a plenary statement concerning the inspiration which was vouchsafed on the first Whitsunday; that is to say, does not include in his statement the great things which this inspiration involved—the uprooting of the prejudices of the apostles, the enlightening of their minds, the "disannulling of the commandment

going before and the bringing in of a better hope." The prophet tells so much as had been revealed to him, and tells no more. Joel may have been without the knowledge that on the great and terrible day of which he writes the Messiah would be the judge, and that the judgment then to take place would bring about consequences belonging to another stage of existence. Certainly Joel's prophecy is not explicit to such points. The like of this acknowledgment ought to be made with respect to other prophets. No prophet claims to know everything, though each, when he says "Thus saith the Lord," speaks with divine authority. In the representations concerning the future which the planner made by means of Old Testament seers, the case is as when an architect exhibits several draughts, one showing the inside of the edifice which he proposes to erect, another showing the outside, one showing how the building will look when seen from one point of view, another showing its aspect from an opposite standpoint. Joel says much of the glories of the time to come, nothing of the Mediatorial Person who is to wield the sceptre of the coming kingdom. Jeremiah predicts the king as well as the kingdom, but says nothing of the suffering of the king. A psalm describes a sufferer who on the coming of relief from

suffering, will make a banquet which will be accepted by the meek from the first, and soon or late will be accepted in all parts of the world ; but this psalm says nothing of expiation as wrought, or of priesthood *as* exercised by the sufferer. Another psalm recognizes a personage who is both a king and a priest, but does not disclose the fact that this priest would offer up himself. A vision of Zechariah represents the king as coming to Jerusalem seated upon an ass colt. A vision of Daniel represents him as coming to the ancient of days upon the clouds of heaven. No vision combines the two exhibitions. Even in the New Testament analogous facts occur, as when St. Paul says,* “Now go I to Jerusalem, not knowing what shall befall me there, save that the Holy Ghost witnesseth in every place that bonds and afflictions await me.” The history seems to show that the witnessing meant is not from within the apostle, but is such as reaches him through the medium of contemporary prophets. Nay, this apostle declares that the knowledge he possesses, prophetic as it is, compares with the knowledge to which he looks forward, as that which is in part compares with that which is in whole—as the partial compares with the perfect—as the thought and understand-

* Acts xx. 23.

ing of a child compares with the thought and understanding which the child reaches when he arrives at manhood.* If a Christian apostle's prophetic knowledge was to be thus eclipsed in the life beyond the grave, what wonder if the knowledge of a single Old Testament prophet needed to be collated with the knowledge of fellow prophets, in order to form the mind to the true conception of the things of the New Testament time? If the gift of prophecy had come of the will of man, one or other of the prophets would no doubt have depicted the things of the future with that completeness in which men delight. If, on the contrary, the holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost, and no further, if they spake in such a way that when not thus moved they abstained from prophesying and sought information from other prophets, David from Nathan, Daniel from Jeremiah ; no prophecy of Scripture is of private interpretation ; no prophecy admits of being interpreted by itself. We must compare Scripture with Scripture, Zechariah with Daniel, Jeremiah with Isaiah, in order to obtain such a conception of the scheme of the Inspirer as will approach to comprehensiveness. We must compare Joel's mention of the great and terrible day of the Lord with the revela-

* I Cor. xiii. 9-12.

tion made by a prophet who lived much later in the Old Testament time, viz., the tidings that many of them that slept in the dust of the earth should awake, some to everlasting life and some to shame and everlasting contempt. Bring together the draughts of the prophetic draughtsmen, in such manner that you may collate the papers one with another ; judge of no aspect of the structure without taking other aspects into contemplation ; think of the kingly, the suffering, the witnessing, the priestly sides of the edifice which was to rise, if you would reach that conception of New Testament times which the Old Testament authorized. Failing to use this collating method, you will as an interpreter be in many dangers.

4. With regard to time. It has been said by writers that time is not an element in prophecy, and that prophets saw the events of the future as the naked eye beholds the stars, descrying their existence and the severalty which obtains among them, but not their distance from each other. The former part of this statement is not universally true. Joel makes express mention of time when, passing from the secular blessings which he had predicted for Israel, he writes, "It shall come to pass afterward that I will pour out," etc. "Afterward" certainly imports for the outpouring predicted a pos-

teriority in time, viz., a posteriority to the rains, fertility and plenty he had just before (within the chapter) promised to the Holy Land. In like manner he tells of a priority in time, when he places the obscuration of the heavenly bodies before the coming of the day of the Lord.

Nevertheless much of the statement is borne out by the phenomena with which we meet. In "The Burden of Babylon" * little or nothing is said of an interval destined to elapse between the conquest which was to befall the place and the total desolation which was to consummate its sad lot. The prophetic eye sees only the beginning and the completion of the decline of the city ; although many centuries intervened between the downfall of Babylon under the power of Cyrus, King of Persia, and the total subversion which the desolations of the great city now exhibit. Babylon, the glory of kingdoms, the beauty of the Chaldean's pride, *is* as when God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah. For generation after generation it has not been dwelt in. Its site is a ruin, but it did not become such for many hundreds of years after the downfall the city suffered at the hands of Cyrus. Its downfall paved the way for the restoration of Israelites to their native soil. Its total ruin accredits Isaiah's other

* Isa. xiii.

predictions. The occurrences which intervened did not come, and for his purposes did not need to come, within the purview of the prophet.

Similar was the purview vouchsafed to Joel; similar, certainly, was the purview he gave to his readers, when he wrote the prediction we are considering. He tells nothing in relation to the length of the time which was to intervene between the gift of the secular blessings and the gift of the widespread inspiration. Eighteen hundred years have elapsed since the outpouring of the Spirit, which took place a few days after Christ's ascension : The coming of the great and terrible day of the Lord has not yet occurred. Yet Joel makes no mention of a difference in time between the two events (the inspiration and the coming), except the statement that the outpouring and the events next told of were to take place antecedently to the transcendent day. A man standing on ground comparatively low may see in the prospect which presents itself mountain after mountain, one more distant than another, the second higher than the first, and the third transcending the second. He may see them all, and yet fail to see and even fail to imagine the plains and fruitful fields which lie between the several ridges. Joel's vision of time may have been like such a man's vision of place.

That prophets had revelations to the effect that their ministry was not for their own benefit, and that these seers were curious concerning the chronology of the future is expressly said by St. Peter.* “The prophets searched diligently, searching . . . what manner of time the Spirit of Christ . . . did point unto, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ and the glories which should follow. To whom it was revealed that not unto themselves but unto you they did minister.”

5. Something needs to be said with regard to the treatment the apostles give to “that which is written by the prophet Joel.” That St. Paul, in the passage † where he quotes the place in Joel with which we have to do, interprets the “deliverance” as the Christian salvation, the “whosoever” as including the heathen as well as Israelites, and the invocation of the incomparable name as a thing which must be preceded by the hearing and consequently by the preaching of this name, hardly needs to be insisted.

But what of the treatment ‡ which St. Peter gives to the passage of which I am writing? On the day of the outpouring of the Spirit he declared the outpouring to be the thing which Joel had spoken; and the apostle proceeded to quote sentences of

* I Peter i. 10-12.

† Rom. x. 11-14.

‡ Acts ii. 16-21.

the prophecy. In so quoting he substituted "*In the last days* it shall come to pass" in place of the words, "it shall come to pass *afterward*." The substitution is easy to be accounted for, if the days meant are to be reckoned from the times in which Joel flourished. The prevailing custom of the Old Testament prophets was to predict an event or series of events due in the nearer future, and to proceed from the mention of these occurrences to the mention of events which were to occur in the more distant future. The passage from the one mention to the other is commonly introduced by the phrase "the last days." This phrase serves to distinguish the ultimate from the ulterior, the latest from the later of the periods which came within the vision of the prophet. Joel, after foretelling rain, fertility, and plenty for days comparatively near to the time at which he wrote, distinguishes from these days other periods, periods comparatively remote, by prefixing the phrase "afterward" to the mention of the latter series of days. Thus this phrase and the phrase "In the last days" came to be convertible terms.

The New Testament writers regard the ultimate future announced by Joel and other seers as having already begun in the first age of Christianity, though not as having been brought in that age to its close

or culmination. An old phrase sometimes continues to be used after it has ceased to be strictly appropriate. A corporation keeps its original title long after this title has ceased to be descriptive of the business to which it now devotes itself. A firm retains its old name when no person mentioned in that name survives. So the old phrase, "the last days," sacred by reason of its origin, and venerable by reason of long use, continued to be employed even when the days meant were identical with the period in which the speaker lived. Take, for example, the diction at II Tim. iii. 1-6.

Here Timothy is given to know that the times for which so much of blessing had been predicted by prophets were not to be in all respects halcyon days ; that, on the contrary, grievous times were to coincide with these days ; and this intimation introduces a precept to the effect that Timothy should turn away from the evil doers the last days were to produce, and the precept is followed by a characterization of contemporaries of Paul and Timothy, as belonging to this class of evil doers. One cannot see how the precept and the characterization connect with the introductory intimation, unless the writer of the epistle, the person addressed and the persons characterized, lived within the period of "the last days ;" that is to say, unless

the last days, however long they might continue, were considered as being already present when Paul and Timothy lived. "Know this, that in the last days grievous times shall come . . . men shall be lovers of self, lovers of money . . . from * these also turn away ; . . . of these are they that creep into houses and take captive silly women." Joel's "afterward" introduces the whole period from the Pentecostal inspiration to the great and terrible day of the Lord, and St. Peter's "last days" cover the same ground. The interval meant had begun when the apostles spoke and wrote. It will not end until time shall be no more.

In answer to the inquiry which the crowd at Jerusalem addressed to St. Peter at the end of his speech, the apostle said, "To you is the promise and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call unto Him."† The apostolic speaker must have meant by "the promise" the outpouring of the Spirit spoken of by Joel, and the "receiving the gift of the Holy Ghost," just promised by himself. In declaring that the promise extended to so many as God should call, the apostle had in mind the prophetic assurance that among the remnant in Jerusalem there should be "those whom the Lord should

* Revised version.

† Acts ii. 37-40.

call." In the exhortation, "Save yourselves from this crooked generation," the apostle characterizes the bulk of the Israelites by means of a characterization* applied by Moses to this people, and either has ceased to make use of the prophecy he has quoted or he explains the deliverance expressed in the clause, "Whosoever shall call upon the name of Jehovah shall be delivered," as meaning no less than salvation, a salvation in character from the category of the crooked or untoward ; that is to say the salvation which is to be made consummate in the great and terrible day of the Lord.

When the author of the Acts of the Apostles appends to his account of the day of Pentecost, and of days which followed, the statement, "The Lord added, day by day, those that were being saved," † he means that persons in Jerusalem were compliant with the exhortation "Save yourselves from this crooked generation," and, complying, ceased to be participants in the character and lot of the mass of Israel. So ceasing they were made constituents of the infant church of Christ. They experienced the deliverance of which Joel had written ; a deliverance which, after beginning in their own souls, was to be preached by them in countries where the name of Jehovah had been unknown.

* Deut. xxxii. 5, 20.

† Acts ii. 47, revised version.

CHAPTER XII.

THE KINGDOM TO BE SET UP BY THE GOD OF HEAVEN.

DANIEL II., VII., IX.

THE Kingdom of Heaven is often understood as meaning simply and solely the future condition of the people of God. But the phrase is sometimes insusceptible of this signification, as, for example, when the kingdom is compared to a net cast into the sea, gathering things worthless to the fisherman as well as fish of the kind desired—a net from which when drawn to shore the worthless contents were cast away. The history of the phrase, “the Kingdom of Heaven,” will do much toward the illustration of its meaning.

1. The history is as follows :

Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, has a vision. A colossal statue stood upon feet composed partly of iron, partly of clay or earthenware. The legs were wholly of iron, the belly and thighs of brass, the breast and arms of silver, the head of gold. A

stone cut out without hands struck the fragile feet of the statue and demolished the whole. The iron, the clay, the brass, the silver and the gold were broken in pieces, became chaff, as it were, and the wind carried them away. No place was found for them. The stone that smote the image became a great mountain and filled the whole earth. The prophet Daniel resided in Babylon at the time. Nebuchadnezzar had been troubled by the dream, but was unable to state its particulars. Daniel recited the particulars. The monarch seems to have readily identified the statement and the vision, the one with the other. The thing seen had come back to his mind, and the main point now was the meaning of the thing. To this, the interpretation, the prophet proceeded without discrediting the king's belief that the dream was symbolical. Monarchies were to follow one another in time, as in the statue metals followed one another in place. In the days of the kings belonging to this succession of monarchies, the days of one or other of these kings, the God of Heaven was to set up a kingdom which should never be destroyed, and in which the sovereignty should never be relinquished to a foreign dynasty. The new kingdom was to be world-wide and everlasting, though not erected nor extended by human hands, and in its beginnings

comparable rather to a little stone than to a rock.

In the seventh chapter of the Book of Daniel another vision is mentioned. The sea, the waves of which are in Scripture an image of the "madness of the people," is the scene which first presents itself to the view of the prophet. From the agitated sea four beasts, one after another, emerge. A judgment ensues. Under this judgment the mastery the beasts had possessed comes to an end, and another figure, not a mere animal, but a person with human qualities, appears upon the scene. A mastery which is destined to become universal is consigned to this person. "I saw in the night visions, and behold there came with the clouds of heaven one like unto a son of man. He came even unto an Ancient of days. And there was given him dominion and glory and a kingdom, that all the peoples, nations and languages should serve him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed." Much in the vision may require future developments in history to serve as a key to parts of the prophecy, especially to the parts which speak of outgrowths from the head of the fourth beast. The judgment told of, seen as it was by a seer, may in its realization run through

ages, some of which have not yet begun. Nevertheless one thing is incontestable, viz., that a new kingdom, a new system of persons and things, headed by a king, was according to Daniel to arise under the action of the Ancient of days. The representation concurs with that which had been made by Daniel in the exposition of the future which the seer had given to Nebuchadnezzar, viz., in the mention of a kingdom superhuman in its origin and destined to fill the whole earth. But the later vision goes beyond the earlier in this, that it introduces a person intermediary between the Universal Father and the nations of mankind ; a person described as like unto a son of man ; thus described, perhaps, because it was intended to give him a characterization which would contrast his qualities with those of the previous kings, who had appeared in the vision as beasts. He appears to be the same as is exhibited in Daniel's ninth chapter as "the anointed one (Messiah), the prince."

The Book of Daniel, as quoted above, warranted the expectation that a kingdom to be established by the Divine Being would arise. A similar expectation was authorized by the many passages of the Old Testament which represented the headship of David over the chosen people, as about to revive, or more than revive, in the person of a descendant

of David, a headship destined to extend eventually over the whole world and to last until the end of time. Such an expectation was current in Israel when Christ came. The ministry of John the Baptist began in the early part of the Christian era, and a principal part of this ministry consisted in the announcement, "The kingdom of heaven is at hand." The fact that the Baptist does not explain his phrase—that he says *the* kingdom—implies that an order of things which might be thus denominated was an idea known to the people addressed. Shortly after John had made this announcement, Jesus came preaching, "The time is fulfilled and the kingdom of God is at hand." The expectation thus taken for granted as already existing, appears on Jewish lips in the exclamation, "Blessed is he that shall eat bread in the kingdom of God." Christ was asked "when the kingdom of God should come," and on one of His approaches to Jerusalem the inhabitants of the neighborhood "thought that the kingdom of God would immediately appear." These things occurred in circumstances which hardly allow us to believe that the kingdom meant was the future state of human existence. Such facts make it plain that the establishment of a kingdom was expected; that this idea was familiar to the Jewish mind; and that

it was embodied in the phrases, "The kingdom of God," "The kingdom of heaven." The two phrases seem to be identical in meaning, and both of them to be abbreviations of Daniel's utterance, "The God of heaven shall set up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed." "The kingdom of heaven" is the usual phrase in St. Matthew, and occurs in the first Gospel only, other evangelists in the parallel places using as their phrase "The kingdom of God."

It is no less evident that the kingdom to be established was looked for with a kind of expectation which needed to be rectified. Though the kingdom never to be destroyed was to be set up by the God of heaven ; though the stone which was the symbol of this *regime* had been cut out without hands, a representation which could mean hardly less than the absence of human agency ; though the like unto a Son of man approached the Ancient of days, not as upheld by men, but upon the clouds of heaven, in order to receive investiture with the gift of dominion ; the multitude after the miracle of the loaves and fishes, were about to come and "take Jesus by force to make Him king."* A general belief seems to have obtained that when the head of the kingdom appeared His presence on earth

* John vi.

would be uninterrupted by death or other cause. When Christ,* “signifying by what manner of death He should die,” said that He would “be lifted up” from the earth, the multitude answered, “We have heard out of the law that the Christ abideth forever. How sayest thou the Son of man must be lifted up? Who is this Son of man?” Even the disciples of our Lord needed to be apprised of the fact that he was to become invisible. They needed to be told, “The days will come when ye shall desire to see one of the days of the Son of man and shall not see it.”† Jews seem to have believed that “the kingdom” when Christ preached was still in every sense future, and would be of observable coming; that it would be consummate from the beginning; that the Christ’s first arrival on earth would be with supernatural exhibition of supremacy, such as will attend the second coming of Jesus; or that the presence begun by the first and only arrival would be with the state and circumstance which attend the potentates of the earth.

That the dominion of the Christ would include at first but a few disciples, and would be co-extensive with mankind in the event only; that it would be for ages exercised invisibly in heaven, at the right hand of the Father, the Jews seem not to

* John xii. 32-34.

† Luke xvii. 22.

have imagined. Though the symbolic stone grew to be a mountain in the event only, not at its original appearance—though in vision Jehovah had said unto the Lord of David, “Sit thou at my right hand until I make thine enemies thy footstool,” Jews appear *not* to have believed that such representations authorized an expectation that the Lord of David would be withdrawn from the earth—would be invisible and in heaven—during an interval of time which would reach its end when the Father had put His enemies under His feet, and not before—an interval which might last for centuries.

Unless you bear in mind that the kingdom was conceived erroneously—was expected with error in the mode of conception—you will not comprehend the parables in which small beginnings contrast with a large outcome; for example, the parable of a grain of mustard seed which grew to be a tree, and the parable of leaven which a woman hid in three measures of meal. Nor will you comprehend how the statement* that the word of the kingdom would depend for productiveness upon the state of the soul which it reached, like seed which depends for productiveness upon the character of the soil where it is sown, how this statement could be represented as belonging to the category

* Matt. xiii, 10-19.

of the mysterious, as among "the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven." A teaching of this description requires no explanation for those who have been brought up under Christ's doctrine. But if such statements were made to a people to whom they were the opposite of obvious, and to whose long cherished conceptions they were irreconcilable, they might well be denominated mysterious, in the sense in which this word is used in the Scriptures, viz., with the intention to characterize a thing as unknown, unexpected and requiring to be revealed—rather than as having the quality of incomprehensibility.

2. There remains the important question, How is the kingdom set up by the God of heaven exhibited in the New Testament? How ought the dominion given by the Ancient of days to the Son of man to be conceived of?

A kingdom is a system of persons and things in which an individual is supreme. The persons are the king and his subjects. Among the things are the realm, enactments to regulate the conduct of the subjects, and such a management of events and influences as brings about a *regime*. "The kingdom of God and of Christ" is simply the Christian system. But "the king" seems to be never absent from the biblical idea, not even in the apothegm, "The kingdom of God is righteousness and peace."

The identity implied in this utterance is an identity in effect or the like of effect, as when we say, "Knowledge is power." So Scripture says, "This is life eternal, that they should know Thee, the only true God," although life and knowledge are not identical in all respects. The Universal Father appears in the New Testament correspondently with the appearance of the Ancient of days in Daniel, as the person who originates the supremacy of the head of the kingdom; the Son of man as the person to whom the supremacy is given and by whom it is exercised. The supremacy is mediatorial, and is to continue "until He shall deliver up the kingdom to God, even the Father"*—a goal perhaps the same as that which will be reached when the mystery of God shall be finished," and "time shall be no longer."†

In the declarations "All things are delivered unto me by the Father," "All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth," "My Father hath appointed [me a kingdom," the Son of God, in His incarnate capacity, claimed individual supremacy. In various ways He exercised this supremacy. By the tidings "the kingdom of God is come nigh unto you," He invited persons to become His subjects. By baptizing persons He recognized

* I Cor. xv. 24.

† Rev. x. 6, 7.

them as having the quality of membership in the system He erected. By the declaration, "The law and the prophets were until John: From that time the gospel of the kingdom of God is preached," He pronounced the ministry of St. John the Baptist to be the goal at which the Old Testament *regime* had ended its career and whereat the *regime* predicted by Daniel had begun. Accordingly He legislated anew. He pronounced "Not that which goeth into the mouth defileth a man," "The hour now is when neither in this mountain nor in Jerusalem shall men worship the Father," and by these edicts He annulled for the people of His system the Levitical distinction between clean and unclean meats, and annulled the command that all male Israelites, three times in every year, should worship at Jerusalem. He ordained a like* "disannulling of the commandment going before," when he said, "Moses, for the hardness of your hearts, suffered you to put away your wives, but I say unto you that every one that putteth away his wife, save for the cause of fornication, maketh her an adulteress." There were other things appertaining to the new system; not the least of these things was the ordinance which instituted a supper commemorative of the suffering which was declared by the Head of

* Heb. vii. 18.

the kingdom to be His destination in the early future.

That the kingdom was to have an existence before its glorification, and that the system was to exhibit the church, the company of subjects of the King, as one of its component parts, were truths implied, not only in the parable of the net cast into the sea, but in the comparison of the kingdom to a field in which the owner had sown good seed only, but an enemy had sown tares ; a comparison, the moral of which is declared in the statement, " The Son of man shall send forth His angels, and they shall gather out of His kingdom all stumbling-blocks and them that do iniquity." How can persons be gathered at Christ's second coming out of His kingdom unless this kingdom exists before His second coming ? Not only the antagonism of the new system to the powers of darkness, but the manifestation of this system as a thing already present at the time when Messiah the Prince ministered upon earth, was taught when Christ said, " If I, by the Spirit of God, cast out devils, then is the kingdom of God come upon you." The God of Heaven had erected the kingdom which should never be destroyed—Christ declared it ready for accessions—the *regime* had begun and invited aliens to become participants in the hope it held

out, when Jesus said to the men of his time, "Take my yoke upon you."

As to the territory of the King, it is not geographical. When the head of the system said "The kingdom of God is within you," He described the domain of His supremacy as being in time present, rather a sphere than a territory ; He declared the inner man to be already, at the time of the speech, a circuit wherein the supremacy meant existed and was to be recognized. The breast of the human being was its focus or point of concentration.

But, notwithstanding the spiritual quality attributed by this apothegm to the present domain of the kingdom, utterances co-exist with the apothegm which import not only that the kingdom was to have a manifestation in the visible church (a truth implied in parables already quoted) but teach that the people of the King were to come ultimately into the possession of an outward territory. One while the Saviour exhibited the kingdom as a system to be entertained in the bosom. Another while He exhibited it as a domain and company, which were (in the issue of things, but not before this issue) to be made accessible, to ingress. He made this twofold representation in a single sentence when He said, "Whosoever shall not receive

the kingdom of God as a little child he shall in no wise enter therein." The system appears in some cases, in one of its aspects, in other cases on a different side ; in some connections as incipient, in others as advanced in power or extent, in a third class of utterances as consummated. Its ultimate stage is once * distinguished from preceding stages by being described as " the *everlasting* kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ." If it seems strange that such distinctions are not often made thus in express words—strange that one and the same chapter contains both the prayer " Thy kingdom come " and the notification " The kingdom of God is come upon you "—the case has parallels. It is with the word kingdom as it is with the word manhood. The latter with truth and propriety may be used of an infant newly born, as when a mother is said to rejoice because a man is born into the world. Yet the phrase is more frequently and even distinctively used of an adult, as when an apostle says, " When I became a man, I put away childish things." The kingdom or supremacy of the Son of man was potentially all that it was to become, when Christ in His earthly ministry proclaimed it as present ; but its future phases would so throw into the shade its earlier development,

* II Pet. i. 11.

that only the later development came to be commonly denominated the kingdom of God. A corresponding use of the words "salvation," "adoption" and "redemption" occurs in the New Testament. An inward salvation already belongs to Christians, and is often attributed to them as a thing at present existent; yet salvation is frequently spoken of as future. Believers are declared to have received a spirit of adoption; nevertheless they are said to groan as waiting for adoption. Redemption took place in an important sense when Christ laid down His life as a ransom; yet our Lord, after mentioning antecedents to His second coming says, "When these things begin to come to pass, lift up your heads, because your redemption draweth nigh." In most cases the connection is sufficient to determine whether it is the realm within, the company of persons who subject themselves to the monarch, the territory which the Sovereign is ultimately to assign for inhabitation, or the *regime* according to which the head of the kingdom both sways the inner man and provides for the man thus swayed, the new heaven and the new earth. As for the parts of space* thus denominated, the "earth" is of course the planet which we inhabit, and heaven, or the heavens, is,

* II Pet. iii. 13.

in the diction of the Bible, the name of the regions which men contemplate when they look upward. To be a heaven and an earth, the localities meant must be in some sort analogous to the parts of space humanly known by these names ; and to be new, these localities must in some respect differ from the heaven and the earth which now are.

When St. Paul writes,* “Flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God,” the connection shows that he speaks of the kingdom as it is to exist when it reaches its final stage. Does he mean that in order to enter this kingdom men must be without bodies? This cannot be his meaning, because “rising,” “being raised up,” “resurrection,” is the subject of discourse from the beginning to the end of the chapter in which he writes the momentous sentence concerning which we inquire. After alleging that the rise of the Redeemer from the condition of the dead, the resurrection which occurred in the tomb of Joseph of Arimathea, was a specimen and earnest of a raising or resurrection which is to come to Christ’s people universally, the sacred writer proposes the question, “With what body do they come?” He meets the question by declaring that there are bodies terrestrial and bodies celestial ; classes of

* I Cor. xv. 50.

bodies differing from each other in kind. He writes that the grain deposited in the ground, though in some respects the same as the plant which comes up is in other respects different therefrom, and he thus gives it to be understood that a human body interred may differ from the body which shall be raised up. "As was the earthy [Adam], such also are the earthy, and as is the heavenly [the second Adam], such are they also that are heavenly. As we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly." It is after such statements that the apostle writes, "Now this I say, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God." The remarkable declaration is followed and explained by statements to the effect that at the second coming of our Saviour mankind shall undergo a transmutation. "We shall all be changed." Not a mere transformation, but a change amounting to a transubstantiation ; that is to say, a change in the very material of the bodies belonging to the persons spoken of, must be meant ; if these statements are coherent with the theme of discourse and tend to explain or confirm the allegation that "flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God." On the supposition that the statements are possessed of coherence and such tendency, the allegation must import not that

corporeity will in the issue of things be exchanged for incorporeity, but that our present corporeity will be exchanged for a corporeity not fleshy nor sanguineous, but of a sublimer sort—such a corporeity, perhaps, as some have imagined to belong to angels. Body and flesh are words not precisely the same in meaning. “Body” points to the frame, the system of organs. “Flesh,” [especially when conjoined with “blood,” and when interpreted in the sequel by “corruption” or the “corruptible”] points to the material of the bodies which men have by nature. “There is a natural body and there is a spiritual body.”

What the spiritual body may prove to be we know not at present. Disembodiment does not appear in Scripture as a thing desirable in itself. It appears as having been from the first a penal thing. It involved a penal return to the dust of which man had been made. Disembodiment deprives us of sensation—that is to say, of such impressions on the mind as come through the medium of the outward senses. The dead * “live to God.” They are not extinct. But the deceased are beyond the reach of parents, children and husbands, and, so far as we know or have reason to believe, are destitute of organs by which they might touch, hear or see these persons

* Luke xx. 38.

if present. They may have blessedness in their reminiscences, their prospects, their consciousness, and the felicity such things are capable of imparting ; but where in Scripture do they appear as possessed of the entirety of their nature, or as having reached their culmination ? Re-embodiment, on the contrary, appears distinctly in Holy Writ as matter of promise. If Christians are to have a corporeity in systems of organs more homogeneous with the Holy Spirit, and more helpful to the spirit of holiness which may have come to reside in themselves, if they are to possess organs of sight, of hearing and of other sensation, analogous to such eyes, ears, and the like, as we at present possess, but better tending to sanctity ; these organisms may realize for them the idea of the “spiritual body.” “Behold ! I show you a mystery. We shall not all sleep,” [the sleep of death] “but we shall all be changed—in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump. The trumpet shall sound and we shall be changed.” Capital which we possess may exchange its form of investment, as, for example, hovels may by possibility be exchanged for palaces ; so human souls will have an investiture in bodies incapable of death, insusceptible of mortality. Decease, dissolution, death, is to be engorged by an adverse power, a power

annihilating to death. "This corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal immortality. So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory." "As by one man came death," * "so death passed upon all men, in that all have sinned." "But now is Christ risen from the dead, the first fruits of them that sleep, for as by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead" †—that is to say, came in the potential. The fruit of the principle of resurrection ripened first in the person of Jesus Christ. The whole crop will ripen later, in the persons of them that shall be Christ's at His coming.‡ "We look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall CHANGE our vile BODIES, that they may be fashioned like unto His glorious BODY, according to the mighty working whereby He is able to subdue all things unto Himself."

To insist. An insect has a severalty in its conditions. It is at one time a caterpillar, at another time a butterfly. A like severalty may be predicted of a human being. He is now an infant, then a youth, subsequently a man; at first in the nursery, secondly in the school, thirdly in the broad world.

* Rom.v.12.

† I Cor. xv. 20.

‡ Phil. iii. 20, 21.

So is it with the kingdom set up by the God of heaven. It has different ages, states and spheres. And, as in the order of nature, it is in the infant and adolescent stages that a person requires the most care, so is it in the earlier phases of the life from above. When the kingdom takes the form of a sway within the breast, and when the empire assumes an appearance and shape as the church, then it is that the regnancy requires the most sedulous cherishing. This cherishing is the duty present and pressing. On the other hand in your zeal for the truth that the kingdom set up by the God of heaven for the Son of man has already come, do not deny the truth that this kingdom is still to come, or the truth that the future *regime* is to be an outcome of the present. Both things belong to the same supremacy. The acorn becomes an oak ; the seed sown in the ground rises above the ground a plant. As in these cases, so in the order engendered for human beings by the supremacy of the Son of man—the potential is to become actual.

The potential was conveyed in the assurances, "If the Spirit . . . dwell in you, He that raised Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by His Spirit." * "It is your

*Rom. viii. 11.

Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom." * The actual is to take place when Christ shall appear the second time. At or before this second appearing all obstacles to the complete accomplishment of His work are to be put under His feet. What would not submit to Him with good will is to succumb with or without good will.† "He must REIGN till He hath put all enemies under His feet. The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death." Death having been destroyed, the whole, the inception and the consummation, the kingdom inchoate and the kingdom perfected, the King crowned with thorns and the King coming in the glory of the Father with the holy angels, will turn out to be a unit planned before the world was, partially made manifest eighteen centuries ago, and carried to its ultimate stage at the second advent. If your King is to be such in the ideal, you cannot but be members of His kingdom when this reaches the ideal. If the kingdom of God is within you, it will resemble the germ within a seed ; it will be evolved, first the blade, then the ear, then the full corn in the ear ; last of all, the crop harvested and ingathered, the garner being the new heavens and the new earth. That which as a regnancy had entered the souls of the people of Christ, will as a

* Luke xii. 32.

† I Cor. xv. 25, 26.

realm be itself entered, when this Person, the Son of God, incarnate, shall say to them on His right hand, "Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world." He who reigns not only over the persons but within the hearts of his subjects, who reigns likewise with immeasurable beneficence, infinite power and indestructible life, can hardly fail to endow his people with the new corporeity or to colonize them in the everlasting territory, with view to which He took upon Him their nature, underwent their death and gave them an earnest in His resurrection.

CHAPTER XIII.

BELSHAZZAR.

DANIEL V.

BELSHAZZAR'S banquet has bearings which are not always observed. The account of the feast may be expressed as follows :

Belshazzar, a Chaldean king, was a successor of Nebuchadnezzar. The latter had captured Jerusalem, carried away many of its principal inhabitants to Babylon, and removed thither the silver and gold vessels belonging to the temple of the captured city. Belshazzar made a feast for a thousand of his lords. In his wine he sent for the sacred vessels of the despoiled temple. It would be a triumph to his idols if he coupled with his hymns to these deities, the use of the vessels which had been consecrated to the God of Israel. The king and his company drank wine therefrom, withal praising the gods they idolatrously worship. Within the hour which had begun with the introduction of the consecrated vessels into

the hall illuminated for the great supper, there came forth fingers of a man's hand. The fingers wrote. The writing was done upon the plaster of the wall. Belshazzar was terror-stricken, the joints of his knees were loosed, and his knees struck one against the other. He cried aloud for his wise men. He neither knew the thing meant by the inscription nor could decipher the writing. He promised that whosoever should read the writing and show the interpretation thereof, should be invested in purple, have a chain of gold put about his neck and be the third ruler in the kingdom.

The wise men failing either to interpret or to read, Daniel, one of the captives from Judæa, was called in at the instance of the queen-mother. He pronounced the inscription to be the Chaldean words, Mene, Mene, Tekel Upharsin—words equivalent to the English phrases “numbered,” “weighed” and “divisions.” This, he said, was the writing inscribed. And this is the interpretation of the writing, “God hath numbered thy kingdom and brought it to an end. Thou art weighed in the balances and found wanting. Thy kingdom is divided and given to the Medes and Persians.” The four words, when pronounced by Daniel, seem to have been identified by the monarch as the words written on the wall. The deciphering and the power it im-

plied attested the interpretation. The king, perhaps for the purpose of obtaining the prophet's prayers, performed his promise. Belshazzar commanded, and Daniel was clothed in purple, a golden chain was put about his neck, and he was proclaimed the third ruler in the kingdom. In that night Belshazzar, the Chaldean king, was slain.

The narrative proceeds to tell that in the partitioning of the Chaldean empire, the partitioning foretold in the words "Thy kingdom is divided and given to the Medes and Persians," the central portion, with its capital, the city of Babylon, fell to the share of the Medes. So much is implied in the words translated "Darius, the Mede, took the kingdom." It is true these words have been understood as meaning that Darius captured the kingdom of Belshazzar. But the statement to be found elsewhere * within the Book of Daniel, that "Darius of the seed of the Medes was *made* king over the realm of the Chaldeans," corresponds with the fact that Darius was not the chief person in the conquest of Babylon, and with the probability that the possession of that city was conceded to the Mede by the Persian conqueror, Cyrus. Writers seem to agree that the words of the original mean that the kingly authority in Chaldea, when it had departed from Belshazzar, was taken

* ix. 1.

by Darius in a sense rather passive than active.

The Revised Version removes the danger of misconstruction by substituting the word "received" in place of the word "took," viz., by saying "Darius, the Mede, received the kingdom." There are other places where the Revised Version, while as true to the original as the current English Bible, gives a similar relief from difficulties. To say our conversation is in Heaven,* hardly expresses to the mind of the modern reader the idea that we are aliens residing away from the city to which we belong, viz., the Heavenly Jerusalem, though this is the meaning of the Greek.† To say, "I know nothing by myself, yet am I not hereby justified," seems incongruous, because in the English of the present day (different from the English of two centuries ago), knowing nothing by oneself hardly imports any idea except the want of a knowledge gained independently—a thought which does not suit the connection. The thing meant in the passage would be expressed in modern English by substituting the word "against" for the word "by." The writer means that he is not accused by his own conscience. To say with reference to the day of judgment, "Then shall every man have praise of God," ‡ hardly agrees

* Phil. iii. 20.

† 1 Cor. iv. 4.

‡ 1 Cor. iv. 5.

with other teachings of the Bible with regard to the great day. You feel the want of something to show that the praise meant is the praise due to the man. The Greek warrants the insertion of a word to this effect. In the English of the age of those great scholars, the makers of the current version, "By and by" meant immediately. You require "straightway," or some such word, in several places where "by and by" occurs. These ancient phrases long since became inexpressive of the meanings intended, and their continued use in places where they are now inappropriate, and tend to obscure the sense, is to be regretted. Why not have the Scriptures in a tongue "understood of the people?" Would not the Bible be more read if it were more intelligible? Ought not the Church, the witness and keeper of Holy Writ, to present the sacred book to the more unlearned of her members in the most comprehensible condition into which her pastors can put the volume?

The history of Belshazzar's banquet illustrates the curious co-existence of liberty and dependence which obtains in human beings. Belshazzar, as we have seen, neither understood the import, nor was able to read the words of the inscription upon the plaster of the wall. The Chaldean wise men had given him no help to the meaning or even the de-

ciphering. How came it then that the king unhesitatingly believed Daniel's statement of the sense of the writing? He may have believed the interpretation because the deciphering had been credible. But how had the monarch verified this deciphering? It may be that some remembrance of the movement of the fingers which had written slumbered in the mind of the king and was awakened by the deciphering of the prophet. Memory is often dormant and is aroused in a way as singular as this. It may be that some marks made by the hand which had written were still discernible upon the "plaster" (the lime whitewash) of the wall, and became readable when their connection with each other had been indicated, although not readable before. The monarch could compare the reading given by Daniel with the impressions on his mind and the marks upon the wall. His knowledge had been insufficient to discover the truth, but was sufficient to test the statements of the discoverer, especially if his conscience testified to the statements. On supposition that the case was such, the facts were analogous with the experience of mankind in relation to a thousand matters. The mass of mankind did not discover for themselves the principle of gravitation, or the doctrine of the circulation of the blood. Nor did they of the mass invent for themselves the steam

engine. In like manner mankind could not of themselves discover the great truths of Divine Revelation, and after these truths were revealed, they continued to need reiterated instruction with regard thereto—so true it is that men are dependent. On the other hand, after Newton, Harvey and Watt had published their discoveries or inventions, there was no want of criteria by which these discoveries or inventions could be tested. Similarly, when Jesus Christ had made His revelations, these revelations could be compared with man's moral sense, and with the life and death of the Revealer. After the amount of the revelations had been written, people could compare the instructions given by their clergy with the tenor of the Bible. So, though dependent, they possess a liberty. In accordance with these facts, we find it everywhere taught in the Scriptures both that we need a teaching priest, and that we ought, "of ourselves, to judge that which is right." When the revelations made by St. Paul at Berea are mentioned, it is added, in commendation of his hearers, that these were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they searched the Scriptures, whether those things were so.* Therefore many of them believed. Prove all things and hold fast that which is good.

*Acts xvii. 11, 12.

Belshazzar's feast has a bearing on the difficulties of Scripture, even such as appear in the original.

More than one thing in the narrative is curious. The account implies that Belshazzar was king in Babylon, and was there killed, whereas all other history is distinct to the point that Naboned was the king reigning over the Chaldeans at the time of the capture, was at this time absent from Babylon and was not slain. For more than sixteen hundred years this discrepancy was keenly felt by believers. It was an enigma which troubled inquirers as early as Josephus and later than Sir Isaac Newton. The difficulty was first removed by a decipherment of the present century. In the year 1854, the English explorer, Sir Henry Rawlinson, discovered a cylinder, an inscription upon which made it manifest that Naboned of Babylon had associated with himself a son of his, named Bilsharuzur, and had given this son the title of king. This discovery, besides clearing up the difference between biblical and profane history, explained the fact that he who should decipher and interpret the writing on the wall was to be third ruler in the kingdom, the third rather than the second.

Our knowledge in the future state will compare with our present knowledge as the thoughts of an adult compare with the thoughts which he enter-

tained in his boyhood, as personal knowledge compares with knowledge gained intermediately, as perfect knowledge compares with knowledge which is partial. So says St. Paul when he writes : *

When I was a child, I thought as a child, I understood as a child, I spake as a child, but when I became a man, I put away childish things. Now we see by means of a mirror, in an enigma [such is the most literal translation of those apostolic words] but then face to face. Now I know in part, but then shall I know even as also I am known." The joy which will come when we shall thus exchange puerile and partial knowledge for the knowledge which comes of ocular demonstration, is but poorly figured by the satisfaction which came to believers by Sir Henry Rawlinson's discovery. Until the time of adult and perfect understanding comes, let us be patient, and if theories for the purpose of reconciling discrepancies are proposed, let us receive them as hypotheses which may at last be overturned by discoveries better than it entered into the heart of man to conceive. "Behold, the half was not told me."

*1 Cor. xiii. 9—12.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE MESSENGER OF THE COVENANT.

MALACHI III. 1.

IN the promise, "The Lord whom ye seek shall suddenly come to His temple and the messenger of the covenant whom ye delight in," the phrase "the messenger of the covenant" is curious. What covenant is intended? Who could be meant by the messenger?

With regard to the former of these questions, the answer must be this. Inasmuch as the prophecy came through a prophet of Israel and was addressed to the Israelitish people, the phrase "the covenant," used without limitations or explanation, could hardly import any covenant but that which was familiar to the minds of this prophet and this people, viz., that system of promises and conditions which had been given to the forefather of the Israelitish race and renewed to Israel through the instrumentality of Moses. A British statesman addressing a British as-

semblage, if he spoke of the Constitution, could not but mean the British Constitution, and a prophet of Israel writing a book which from beginning to end addresses the Israelitish race, must be construed analogously. The covenant meant in Malachi must be that which had been made with Abraham and had by means of Moses received modifications.

With regard to "the messenger," a person will find himself on the track to the meaning, if he shall consult an English dictionary of the larger sort, such as those of Worcester and Webster, where it will appear that the words angel and messenger were in the older English equivalent phrases. The word angel, in the time of our translators, was not so restricted as it is in modern English, but was applied to any being who goes forth upon an errand. The terms could be used interchangeably. With this in mind and with the remembrance that the phrase, the messenger of the covenant may mean either the messenger covenanted to the chosen people or the messenger covenanting to that race, an inquirer will find in the earlier books of the Old Testament enough to show that the messenger meant by Malachi could be no other than the person who, when the covenant with Abraham was made, acted as the medium through whom this covenant came,

viz.: the person called "the angel of the LORD" in the statement "the angel of the LORD called out of Heaven unto Abraham and said: * By myself have I sworn, saith the Lord, that in blessing I will bless thee, and in multiplying I will multiply thy seed," etc. The person meant in Malachi could be none other than the person who covenanted with Abraham, *unless* he was the messenger or angel covenanted in the promise,† "Behold I send an angel before thee to keep thee in the way . . . provoke him not, for my name is in him." It matters little whether you take the one or the other of these alternatives. But it is material to observe in both of these promises of the books of Moses, that the Hebrew word translated "angel" is the word translated "messenger" in Malachi. The Hebrew phrase means a person sent on an errand, neither more nor less. If you have "the angel of the Lord" in Genesis and Exodus, you ought to have "the angel of the Covenant" in Malachi—and *vice versa*. Having this identity of phrasing, you would require nothing besides to enable you to identify the message-bearer intended.

It seems strange that in a passage quoted above from the Book of Exodus (the passage where the "angel" appears as covenanted) the Divine Father

* Gen. xxii. 15-17.

† Exod. xxiii. 20, 21

declares, in relation to the benefactor promised, "My name is in Him." Nevertheless, the like of this strangeness appears again and again in the Old Testament. The phenomenon displays itself with especial vividness, if you remember that when the phrase "the LORD" in the English Bible is printed in capital letters, the phrase in the original is "Jehovah." For example, the angel is alleged by Jacob to have given commands to this patriarch and as having announced himself—how remarkably ! "The angel of God" said : * ". . . I am the God of Bethel, where thou anointedst the pillar ; where thou vowedst a vow unto me. Arise, get thee out from this land and return unto the land of thy kindred." An angel of God hesitates not to say "I am the God of Bethel," hesitates not to announce Himself as the being who had, at Bethel, appeared at the top of the symbolic ladder and declared Himself to be Jehovah.† The same patriarch, when expecting death as near at hand, blessed the sons of Joseph in the words,‡ "God, before whom my fathers Abraham and Isaac did walk, the God which fed me all my life long unto this day, the angel which redeemed me from all evil, bless the lads." Similar was the case at the call of Moses,§ "the angel of the

* Gen. xxxi. 11-13.

† Gen. xxviii. 13-19.

‡ Gen. xlvi. 15, 16.

§ Exod. iii. 2-14.

LORD appeared unto him, in a flame of fire, out of the midst of a bush," When this angel spoke, he is represented as saying: "I am the God of thy father." Moses is represented as having hid his face, because he was afraid to look upon God. In answer to the question what was the name of the speaker, the voice from the midst of the bush, the voice of the angel, said unto Moses: "I am that I am . . . Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, Jehovah, God of your fathers . . . hath sent me unto you. This is my name forever, and this is my memorial to all generations." To warrant such language, the angel must have been of Divine nature. In all these passages of the books of Genesis and Exodus, the word translated angel is the word translated messenger in the utterance made through Malachi; "The Lord whom ye seek shall suddenly come to His temple, and the messenger of the covenant."

Has the phenomenon reappeared? Has the messenger of the covenant—the angel who covenanted with the patriarchs, the angel who was covenanted to Israel—made a new advent? It was some four hundred years after the time of Malachi that our Lord appeared. Jesus came to the temple of God at Jerusalem. He treated this temple as HIS.* As

* John ii. 14-21.

though the owner of the sanctuary, he twice expelled therefrom the money changers who profaned its sacredness by their traffic. When He was asked, What sign showest Thou, seeing Thou doest these things? He made the answer, "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up again." Since the evangelist tells us that in thus saying Jesus spake of the temple of His body, His language was scarcely less than equivalent to a declaration that His person enshrined the Deity, as the temple of stone and cement enshrined the Deity. The New Testament describes Him as Mediator of a New Covenant : * He declared Himself a Messenger, a person sent, in the words, † "The living Father hath sent me." Add to these facts the claims which Jesus made for Himself in the utterances, ‡ "All men should honor the Son even as they honor the Father," "I and my Father are one." § Does the New Testament represent our Lord as the declarer or revealer of the Father ? For example, in the sentences : "No man hath seen God at any time, the only begotten Son which is in the bosom of the Father, He hath declared Him," "No man knoweth the Father but the Son, and he to whom the Son shall reveal Him." || Perhaps it was because

* Heb. ix. 15.

† John vi. 57.

‡ John v. 23 ; x. 30.

§ John i. 18.

|| Matt. xi. 27.

of the fact that with us the word of mouth is the thing by which we reveal or declare our meaning, coupled with the fact that the Christ appears in the New Testament as the declarer or revealer of the meaning of the Father, that this incomparable person is sometimes, in the writings of the New Testament, called the "Word"; for example, in the passage * "the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us." At any rate there is no room for doubt as to the question whom the evangelist means by this phrase, "the Word"—no ground for doubt that the evangelist intends to designate the only being who could, in the New Testament, be represented as becoming incarnate; and as if for the purpose of teaching that the Word and the Messenger of the Covenant were one and the same—plainly with the intention of teaching that such a severalty from and identity with God as belonged to the Angel of the Covenant, belonged to the Lord Jesus Christ, the evangelist writes, "the Word was with God and the Word was God."

If the Messenger of the Older Covenant could be distinguished from his sender, and yet assume the prerogative of this sender, so could and so did the Mediator of the Newer Covenant. If the phenomenon is mysterious, if its *rationale* is beyond human

* John i. 1-14.

explanation, if the phenomenon is nowhere in the Old Testament applied to practical uses, it is nevertheless incontestably existent in the statements of that ancient volume ; according to Malachi it was destined to reappear in the history of Israel, and according to the New Testament it did appear at the rise of Christianity.

Two or three remarks require to be annexed to the foregoing.

St. Stephen describes Him with whom Moses held converse on the Mount as the "Angel." Though Exodus * says, "Moses spake, and *God* answered him by a voice," Stephen † says, concerning Moses, "This is he that was with the *Angel* which spake to him in the Mount Sinai."

As regards the mysterious quality of the revelations with which this chapter is concerned, the manner of the Divine existence passes comprehension. With relation to a Being whom we have not seen, and cannot liken to anything that we already know, every theory which we can form must be most imperfect. We have not seen God ; we know with knowledge, strictly so called, no Being without change or end, no uncaused cause. We cannot liken such an idea to anything with which we are acquainted. How true is the thought implied by

* Exod. xix. 19.

† Acts vii. 38.

the Divine question,* “To whom will ye liken or compare me.” How true and how apposite! If a being is such that he cannot be comprehended within the grasp of our minds, if he is invisible and of a nature to which there is nothing analogous, if he cannot be likened or compared, how great is the reason which lies in the saying, Can I, by searching, find out God? Can I find out the Almighty unto perfection? What wonder if the conception of a person who possesses both a severalty from and an identity with the Universal Father is beyond us. Christians are like multitudes of those who go to sea. Many of these know nothing of the principles of navigation, nothing of the compass, nothing of the nature of the steam engine, yet their confidence in the ship, though unaccompanied with a knowledge of the philosophy in accordance with which the vessel proceeds, is justified by experience; they reach the haven where they would be. They believe, they trust, and they come safely to land.

With regard to the connection between the older and the newer parts of the Bible, let me say that the Old Testament is the basis of the New in particulars which are not always recognized. The New Testament has much use for the truth that the Son

* Isa. xl. 18.

of man is superhuman, is divine, since this book teaches that the Son needs omniscience and omnipresence; the doctrine of the volume being that the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son, and that where two or three are gathered in Christ's name, there is Christ in the midst of them. He of whom such statements are true—He who is to be the arbiter of human destinies—must be capable of discerning motives, of reaching the recesses of the inner man, of searching the heart and trying the reins. He who can fulfill the promise to every two or three, must be capable—inasmuch as His people live in countries distant from each other and often assemble at the same time—of vouchsafing His presence ubiquitously. We cannot reconcile the different parts of the Gospel unless we recognize Jesus as Divine. For the purposes of the Old Testament a plurality in the Godhead was not so necessary to be known. An explicit statement of this plurality might obscure for the ages for which the Old Testament was made the monotheistic principle which for those ages seems to have been deemed the most important point. Yet in Moses and Malachi we have this Angel of the Lord, this mysterious Messenger of the Covenant, told of. How can this fact be accounted for except upon the hypothesis that the existence of a plurality in

the Deity was a truth, and was in after times to be a basis for an ulterior revelation ?

When a building is to be altered and enlarged, if no new foundation is necessary, if on removing the soil which has accumulated on and about the old foundation, the discovery is made that the sub-structure suffices for the new superstructure, and had more than sufficed for the old, the presumption will be that an alteration and enlargement, such as are now intended, has been within the intention of the original architect. In like manner, when going beneath the surface of the Old Testament, we meet with "the messenger or angel of the covenant," we conclude that Moses was intended for a witness to things which were afterwards to be spoken. He put a veil upon his face, the face of his writings, and this veil is in Christ done away. The Gospel may be described as a mystery which had been kept secret from the time that the world began, but by Christ and his apostles was, by means of the Scriptures of the Prophets, made known for the obedience of faith.

The two parts of our Bible bear witness to each other, the Old Testament testifies to the New. Christ is the incarnation of the Angel of the Covenant. This Saviour is both human and divine ; so human that He could die and that you may

be confident of fellow feeling on His part ; so divine that you may feel authorized to address to Him your prayers, and may feel certain that His mediation on your behalf must succeed. Take the voyage of life in this ship : be confident that it will land you at the haven where you would be.

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